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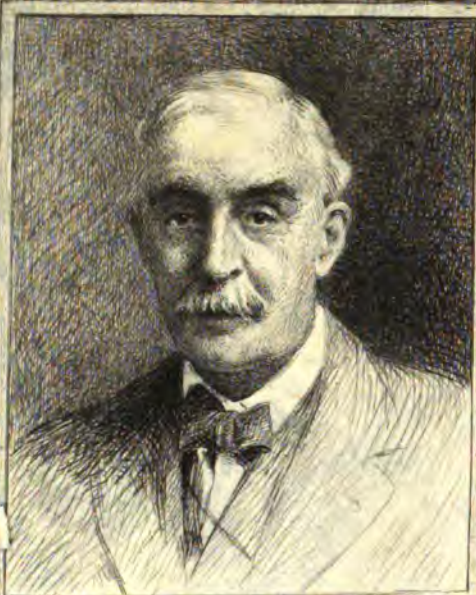
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THE INDUCTIVE METHOD OF
CHRISTIAN INQUIRY.



THE INDUCTIVE METHOD

OF

CHRISTIAN INQUIRY.

An Essay.



BY

PERCY STRUTT.

London :

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1877.

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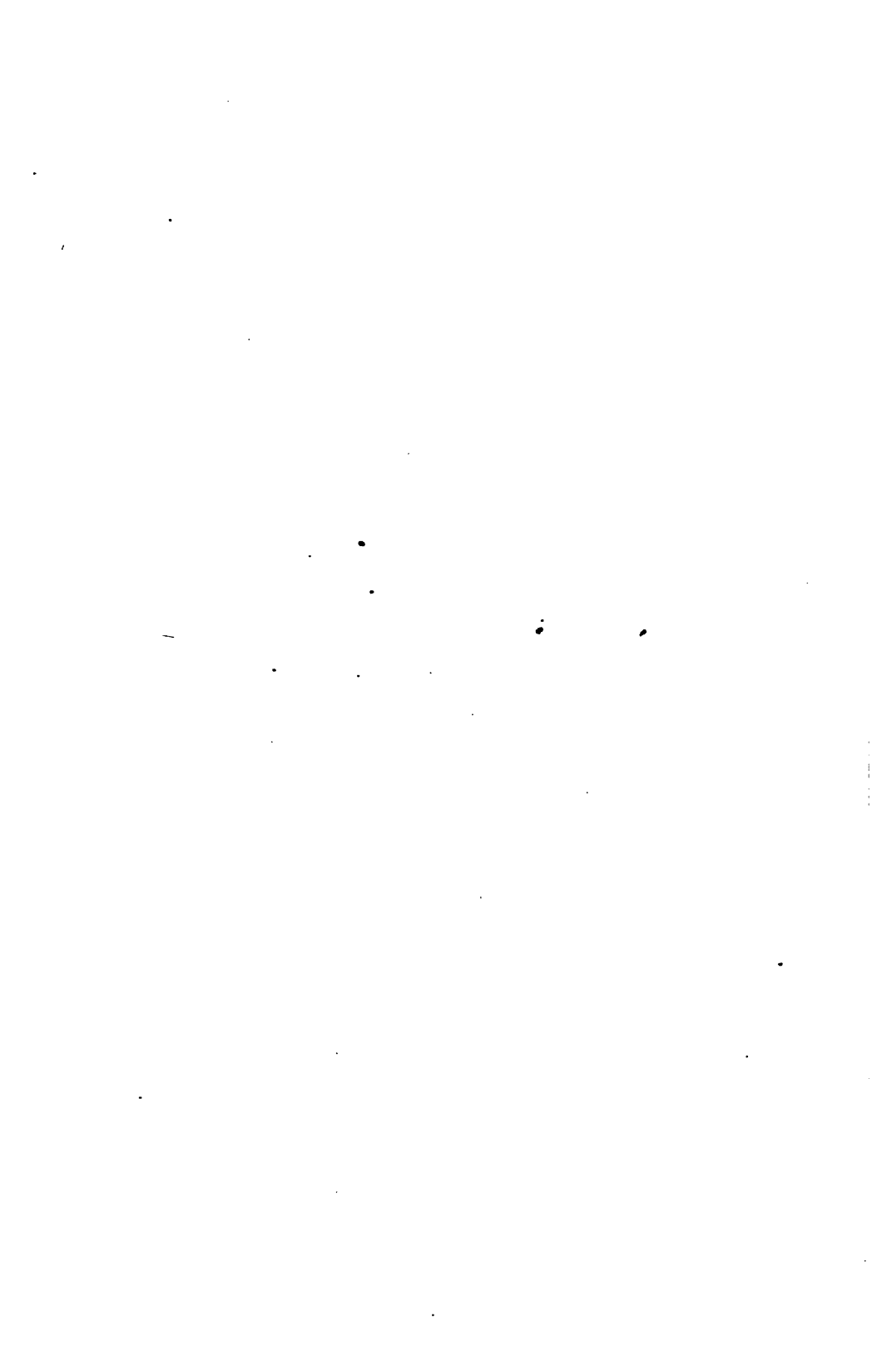
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UNWIN BROTHERS, THE GRESHAM PRESS, CHILWORTH AND LONDON.

3-22-38 J.A.

To my Wife,
WHOSE CARE WAS, DURING MANY YEARS,
BEEN DEVOTED
TO THE MITIGATION OF THE PRIVATIONS
RESULTING TO ME
FROM FAILING SIGHT, I INSCRIBE
This Volume.



PREFACE.

THE great attention which has, during the last thirty years, been devoted to the Life of our Lord, is one of the most hopeful characteristics of modern religious thought. The works of Strauss and Neander, in Germany; of Renan and Pressensé, in France; and among ourselves, the "Ecce Homo," and the "Ecce Deus;" and the popular "Life of Christ," by Dr. Farrar; are but the more prominent evidences of the wide-spread interest in the subject.

As the historical reality of the gospel narrative grows upon the mind, it seems as if, by a kind of second advent, Christ were coming again into the world of human thought, through the medium of the recorded facts of His first advent. And it further seems as if this were taking place at a time, and under conditions, more favourable for the true interpretation of the facts, and for the perception of their bearing upon the great problems of human life and destiny, than at any period since the death of the last of our Lord's inspired apostles.

The present Essay aims only at the humble service

of exhibiting a Method of Inquiry by which general truths may be collected from the original facts of the gospel. This method has the double recommendation—first, of being founded upon the normal exercise of human intelligence, when dealing with matters of fact, even from our earliest childhood ; and secondly, of having already been employed, with wonderful success, in physical research.

As the world is less ready to study a Method of Inquiry than to welcome the results of its successful use ; and as it does not fall in, either with my purpose or my ability, to produce any striking example of the fruit which may be expected to result from the particular method I have recommended, it is only among that class of readers who desire help in their personal study of the gospel history, that I can hope for a favourable reception of my work.

I will only add that, as this Essay has been produced under circumstances of considerable physical infirmity, and the correction of the press has been entrusted to other hands, it is probable that many defects of execution will force themselves upon the reader's attention. For these I will venture to ask a kind indulgence.

PERCY STRUTT.

HACKNEY, LONDON,

Dec. 1876.

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INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. On entering upon the subject of Christian inquiry it is of great importance to call attention at the outset to the fact that there are, in the world, two very different things passing under the name of Christianity. There is one Christianity objectively presented to us in a perfect form, in the person and work of Jesus Christ; and there is another Christianity subjectively realised more or less adequately in the theology of the Church and in the consciousness of individual believers, since the time of our Lord's departure. Thus we have before us, passing under a common name, two groups of phenomena altogether differing from each other. Both are historical; both are objects of extreme interest to the human mind; both are, perhaps, capable of scientific study; but the two require to be kept apart as distinct matters for investigation. What is true of one is by no means true of the other. The facts, which are included in the one, are altogether different from those which are included in the other. And, finally, the documents in which the facts are

recorded are, in the first case, all included in the New Testament; whilst in the second they are scattered through the libraries of the world. The distinction between these two Christianities I regard as of fundamental importance, and it will be kept in view throughout the whole of this essay.

§ 2. Now there are some devout persons to whom it has become a sacred belief that the Christianity of the New Testament has already yielded up to research all that it has to give; that the theology of the Church is a completed science and admits of no further development; that the orthodox creeds duly define all its principles; and that its future progress can only take place by a lateral extension of its dogmas among mankind, and not by a deeper insight being obtained by us into its doctrinal significance and its practical uses in the regeneration of human life. There are other persons, on the contrary, of a more hopeful temper, who have a boundless trust in the Christianity of the New Testament, and who cannot think that it is in any sense exhausted; who look upon it as a Divine gift, whose manifold wealth of wisdom and grace we have as yet only partly explored; who feel that much of what Christ did has never yet received an adequate doctrinal interpretation, and that many of Christ's words have never yet lived in us, nor have even had any satisfactory meaning given to them; and who believe that as the Holy Spirit continues to take

of the things of Christ and reveal them to us there will be a continual augmentation of light and a growing conformity of character to the divine image. There are prophetic utterances which seem to justify such anticipations. "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."* "He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them."†

§ 3. Those who in this alternative of thought are on the hopeful side, and expect a Christian future far more fruitful than the past, will not shrink from the question whether there is any way of studying Christianity, as given in the original facts of our Lord's life, which promises, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to yield us a clearer insight into Christian truth than that which was obtained by the methods employed by the scholastic divines; and more definitely still, whether the method of inquiry which was recommended by Bacon, and has since his time been so successfully used in physical research, may not be also employed, and with equal success, in the study of the historical facts of the Gospel.

§ 4. The method employed in modern science, as distinguished from the method which prevailed in

* Isa. xxx. 26.

† Zech. xii. 8.

the Middle Ages, is strongly marked by two principal characteristics which cannot fail to strike every one who carefully studies the history of physical discovery.

§ 5. The first and most obvious of these two characteristics of modern science is the systematic and persistent use of the process of induction as the only way of arriving at the knowledge of such general truths as may be safely employed in deductive reasoning. This is so marked a feature of the method that the history of physical discovery has been narrated by a distinguished author (Dr. Whewell) as the *History of the Inductive Sciences*.

§ 6. The second characteristic of the modern method of inquiry cannot be so briefly indicated. It may be described as the prevalence of a new spirit, under whose guidance men were led to recognise the moral conditions to which they must conform in order to succeed in the pursuit of truth. The leaders in the movement were animated by fresh hopes of the future; they were possessed by a child-like docility which was ready to go back and begin all over again; they placed unbounded faith in the order of the universe and in the inexhaustible fruitfulness of nature; they learned to distrust the presumptuous theorising of the scholastic philosophy, and altogether renounced the infallibility of human authority; they gave up the idea of discovering the reality of things by mere processes of abstract reasoning; they learned to love truth more than logical consistency, where

these are opposed to each other ; and, finally, they counted it as a "gain" rather than a "loss" to be relieved of prejudices which were once fondly loved. These are moral qualities, and they have done quite as much as the use of induction to give a specific character to the scientific method of modern inquiry.

§ 7. But this is not all ; for the spirit which pervades modern science is more than moral, it is distinctly Christian. To call no man master on earth ; to make the eye single that the whole body may be full of light ; to avoid teaching for doctrines the traditions of men ; to forget the things that are behind, and reach forth to those that are before—all these were duties enjoined by Christianity long before they were accepted as maxims of scientific inquiry. Bacon indeed openly taught, as a fundamental principle of his method, that men must enter the kingdom of science as Christ taught His disciples to enter the kingdom of heaven, by becoming as little children. Such is the second characteristic of modern inquiry.

§ 8. The design of the present essay is fairly to raise and even in part to answer the question, Whether these two characteristics of scientific method—the systematic use of induction and the regulation of inquiry by a moral and Christian spirit—may not be introduced into the study of Christianity itself ? Whether principles whose true significance has been so remarkably exemplified in the lower sphere of secular knowledge may not be

advantageously employed in the higher sphere of Christianity?

§ 9. I am fully aware that serious doubts exist in some good men as to whether a systematic Christian science can be constructed; and even, supposing it to be possible, whether, in the view of the past experience of theological bitterness and strife, it would be for the welfare of mankind and the promotion of Christian charity that any fresh attempt should be made in this direction.* The Christian facts are allowed by such men to have a high moral value, to be available for the purposes of devotion and piety, and to have an elevating influence on the emotional and æsthetic tendencies of the mind; but to be of no avail for intellectual use in the endeavour to solve the spiritual problems of human life. Such men would have us abandon all dogmatic statements of evangelical truth, and fall back upon the practical teaching of Christ and the uninquiring instincts of the Christian life, as the only ground on which true rest and catholic unity can be found.

* One writer says: "For the religion of Christ was exchanged the Christian religion God gave the gospel, and the father of lies invented theology." And again: "Whenever the doctrinal aspect of Christianity has been prominent above the practical, whenever the first duty of the believer has been held to consist in holding particular opinions on the functions and nature of his Master, and only the second in obeying his Master's commands, then always, with a uniformity more remarkable than is obtained in any other historical phenomena, there have followed dissension, animosity, and, in later ages, bloodshed. Christianity, as a principle of life, has been the most powerful check upon the passions of mankind. Christianity as a speculative system of opinion has converted them into monsters of cruelty."—Froude's "History of England," vol. ix. p. 802; vol. x. p. 890.

§ 10. This advice is the result of despair, and would lead us to abandon all hope of reaching any definite doctrinal conceptions of Christian truth. In refusing to accept it I am not called upon to vindicate the scholastic theology of the past. What I assert is, that amendment is better than despair. The remedy for a bad theology is not the abandonment of theology altogether, but the construction of a better theology in its place. The Christian facts have not been in any way changed by the false methods which have been employed in their treatment, or by the erroneous inferences which have been drawn from them. They may be again approached in all their simplicity by minds duly prepared to study them afresh, and by the aid of an organ of research which has proved so wonderfully efficacious when employed in other departments of intellectual activity.

§ 11. That Christ is living in the faith and love of His people is to be seen in the large amount of Christian benevolence which is to be found amongst us. But we still need that He should come more closely into the mental apprehension and moral conscience of mankind. It appears impossible that the present disintegration of theological science should continue for any lengthened period. The tendency of the human mind is constantly to systematise its thoughts respecting all the objects which engage its attention, and to reduce them to order and symmetry according to definite laws of method. Christianity was certainly

never intended to be an exception to this rule. That the work of Christian inquiry is attended with difficulty appears from the amount of error into which men have fallen in the prosecution of it. Should the suggestions offered in these pages be in any way helpful to the Christian student in his researches into the significance of the Gospel narrative, the design of this essay will be sufficiently answered.

BOOK I.

*OF THE FORMATION OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT
BY THE METHOD OF INDUCTION.*

"Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see."—St. JOHN i. 45, 46.

CHAPTER I.

OF INDUCTION IN GENERAL.

§ 1. THE great aim of all scientific inquiry is the collection of general principles or doctrinal truths from the phenomena and events of actual experience. This function of the mind is exercised in two ways. The first of these is by direct intuition, in which case the truth objectively presented to the mind is read off at once by a spontaneous insight, such as we attribute to genius, or natural instinct, or divine inspiration. The second is by induction, and then the knowledge of truth is obtained more slowly, as the result of conscious endeavour, patient thought, and constant readjustment of our opinions with a view of bringing them into a nearer agreement with facts. There is experience in both cases; but in intuition the experience is spontaneous and direct, whilst in induction it is tentative, laborious, and self-corrective. And both deal with realities, and not with mere logical forms; for where there is no self-evident truth to see into there can be no intuition, any more than there can be induction where there are no facts to be interpreted.

§ 2. That very important part of our knowledge which arises from unreasoned or intuitive experience I have here noticed only to pass it by, as lying out of the range of the design now in hand. It is with induction alone that I have undertaken to deal. What that process is, and in what way its principles may be applied to the interpretation of the historical facts of Christianity, are the subjects which I am about to discuss.

§ 3. Induction is one of those words which in ordinary conversation often have a sense very different from that which they bear in science. The popular use of the word simply follows its etymology; and so we hear of the "induction of facts" to prove a scientific theory, or the "induction of texts" to establish a theological doctrine. According to this use of the word almost any theory can be proved, and almost any doctrine established, by induction. For example, the chemists who first laid down the principle that all things in the material world are composed of four elements appealed to facts to prove their assumption. They found the proof in the log of green wood burning on the hearth, which in the process of combustion is found to yield fire, water, air, and earth. Such a "leading in" of facts to prove a theory may preserve the etymological meaning of the word "induction," but it is not the meaning attached to the word by scientific men, nor would such a process be of any use in the service of science.

§ 4. The fact is, the word "induction" (in common with the kindred terms, "illation" and "inference") has, by its scientific use, lost its strictly etymological signification. We speak of "an inference from premises," without any sense of grammatical impropriety, although the Latin preposition *in*, signifies motion *into* or *towards*, not *from*. In like manner, when speaking of the process by which the laws of nature are discovered, we speak of obtaining them by induction from facts, without regard to the etymology of the word. An induction from facts is no greater anomaly than an inference from premises.*

§ 5. As used by the ancients, induction was very imperfectly understood, and consisted in little more than a safe generalisation derived from a complete enumeration of all the particulars of the class under examination. In the hands of Bacon the process was seen to have a power altogether unsuspected before; even though his analysis of it was very imperfect. In Bacon's view, induction is the method by which principles or laws, of *gradually ascending generality*, may be collected, not from a complete enumeration of particulars,

* Speaking of induction, Mr. Newman says, "The word is perhaps unhappy, as indeed it is taken in several vague senses; but to abolish it is impossible. It is the Latin translation of *ἐπαγωγή*, which is the word used by Aristotle as a counterpart to *συλλογισμός*. . . . Looking to the derivatives of *ἐπαγωγή* and *inductio*, they seem to agree better with the *imperfect* than with the *perfect* acceptation, as meaning 'to draw upon,' or 'overdraw.' When we know A, B, and C, we draw (*ἐπι*) *in addition* the D, as belonging to the same class. If this is not the derivation, I do not know how to account for the word."—"Lectures on Logic," by F. W. Newman, p. 78.

but from carefully selected examples or representative cases, or, as he calls them, prerogative instances; and this slow and gradual ascent from particulars, rising step by step through the "middle principles" to truths of the highest generality, he regards as the most important characteristic of the reform which he sought to introduce into the method of scientific inquiry. The actual progress of discovery has by no means conformed to this graduated order. It has, on the contrary, often ventured at once upon the most daring hypotheses, and has then submitted these hypotheses to the test of a severe verification. If this test is honestly used, there is little risk of permanent error resulting from the freest use of provisional conjecture.

§ 6. But this test can only be honestly used by us when, in the pursuit of truth, we are as willing to admit the evidence of those facts which tend to modify or limit, or even to reverse our earliest judgments, as we are those which tend to confirm them. Neglect of negative instances has been the fruitful cause of error at all times. Coincidences once observed are held to warrant universal conclusions, notwithstanding the existence of numerous examples to the contrary; and when the mind is once made up, it will resolutely shut its eyes, rather than submit to the limitations of actual facts. "A few times hitting or presence," says Bacon, "countervails oftentimes failing or absence, as was well answered by Diagoras to him that

showed him, in Neptune's temple, the great number of pictures of such as had escaped shipwreck, and had paid their vows to Neptune, saying, 'Advise now, you that think it folly to invoke Neptune in tempests.' 'Yea; but,' saith Diagoras, 'where are they painted that are drowned?' " *

§ 7. Bacon claims for the inductive process as taught by himself, that it is to be regarded as a new logic. If this claim is allowed, it requires us to recognise a distinction between the logic of proof and the logic of discovery. The logic of discovery aims at the increase of knowledge, not at the vindication of received opinions. It is ever on the look-out for new truth, and is not concerned with the establishment of foregone conclusions.

§ 8. The nearest approach to a definition of the word induction by Bacon himself which I have found in his writings is contained in the two following passages. The first is taken from the "Advancement of Learning." "The induction which the logicians speak of, and which seemeth familiar to Plato, is utterly vicious and incompetent: wherein their error is the fouler, because it is the duty of art to perfect and exalt nature; but they, contrawise, have wronged, abused, and traduced nature. For he that shall attentively observe how the mind doth gather this excellent dew of knowledge, like unto that which the poet speaketh of,—

"*Aërei mellis cœlestia dona*" (Virg. *Georg.* iv. 1),

* "Advancement of Learning," p. 201. Kitchen's ed.

distilling and contriving it out of particulars natural and artificial, as the flowers of the field and garden, shall find that the mind of herself by nature, doth manage and act an induction much better than they describe it. For to conclude upon an enumeration of particulars, without instance contradictory, is no conclusion, but a conjecture; for who can assure, in many subjects, upon those particulars which appear of a side, that there is not other on the contrary side which appear not? As if Samuel should have rested upon those sons of Jesse which were brought before him, and failed of David, which was in the field.* And this form, to say truth, is so gross, as it had not been possible for wits so subtle as have managed these things to have offered it to the world, but that they hasted to their theories and dogmaticals, and were imperious and scornful towards particulars; which their manner was to use but as *lictors* and *viatores*, for sergeants and whiffiers, *ad summovendam turbam*, to make way and make room for their opinions, rather than their true use and service. Certainly it is a thing may touch a man with a religious wonder to see how the footsteps of seducement are the very same in divine and human truth: for as in divine truth man cannot endure to become as a child; so in human, they reputed the attending the inductions, whereof we speak, as if it were a second infancy or childhood."†

* 1 Sam. xvi.

† "Advancement of Learning," p. 190. Kitchen's ed.

§ 9. The second passage is taken from his later work, the "Novum Organum." "In forming axioms a form of induction should be used, different from that hitherto practised, for induction which proceeds by way of simple enumeration is puerile and uncertain in its conclusiveness. But induction which shall be useful for the discovery and demonstration of the arts and sciences ought to divide nature by proper rejections and exclusions, and then, after as many negatives as are necessary, to conclude concerning the affirmatives, which has not yet been done, except by Plato, who unquestionably, to a certain extent, employed this sort of induction to investigate definitions and ideas. But much of what has never yet entered the thoughts of man must necessarily be employed, in order to exhibit a good and legitimate mode of induction or demonstration, so that greater pains should be taken with it than has hitherto been taken with the syllogism. The assistance of induction is to serve us not only in the discovery of axioms, but also in defining our notions. And unquestionably very much indeed is to be hoped from this induction." *

§ 10. Both the originality and the value of Bacon's teaching have been called in question. Induction, it has been said, may be the only right road to truth, but Bacon was not the maker of the road,† for nature made it; and as to his rules, they are not wanted, because in truth they only tell us

* "Novum Organum," Bk. i. Aph. 105.

† Method is derived from *μετά* and *ὁδός*, a way or road.

to do what we are all doing without them. Such was the estimate given by Lord Macaulay in his celebrated article on Bacon in the *Edinburgh Review*.

§ 11. But it must be remembered that the office of the mental philosopher (and such was Bacon's true character; he was no physicist) is to give an explanation of mental processes, not to create them; to discover the true method, not to invent it. Men reasoned before they attempted by reflection to form for themselves a science of logic. If our mental processes went forward with the regularity of the circulation of the blood, or as unerringly as the instinctive operations of animal life, even then some credit would be due to the man who was the first to find out the law of their action. Newton's astronomy is not the less precious because it merely represents facts which existed long before he discovered them; it in no way detracts from his merit to say that Nature, and not he, made the pathway of the planets. But there is this difference between the discoveries of Newton and those of Bacon: the discoveries of Newton corrected a false astronomy which in no way interfered with the perfect regularity and order of the heavenly bodies; whilst the discoveries of Bacon corrected false methods of thought which had actually thrown the intellectual world into disorder and hindered the regular progress of mankind in the pursuit of truth.

§ 12. As the prevalence of disease has led to the

cultivation of anatomy and physiology, so the existence of error has led to the study of logic. Had men always conducted their inquiries correctly, there would have been little need for a scientific investigation of the laws of thought. But the case is altogether changed when we consider the vast amount of mischief which has resulted from the false method established by the authority of the schools. When the mind has been systematically misdirected by a false logic, it is needful to call in the aid of analysis in order to correct the evil. Some persons object to the introduction of any scientific interference with practical questions, and they tell us that to be consistent we ought to take chemists for our cooks and mineralogists for our masons. It is enough to say, that when our food is adulterated our cooks cannot well dispense with the chemist's aid; and when masons build our houses with stone which begins to perish as soon as it is exposed to the weather, they cannot fail to profit by the science of the mineralogist.

§ 13. I will add to these general observations only one thing more, and that is that the inductive method may itself be inductively studied. Induction is a normal exercise of human thought, and a scientific inquiry into its nature can only take place after it has been actually employed in real life. Greatly as the writings of Bacon may aid us in the investigation of the process, it is still better for us to study the actual course of scientific discovery in the lives and works of the men who have

successfully devoted themselves to the pursuit of truth. We there see the human mind at work, and can directly study the phenomena which it exhibits whilst so employed; and the materials, available for this purpose, are now more abundant than at any former period of the intellectual history of mankind.

CHAPTER II.

THE SCIENTIFIC VALUE OF FACTS.

§ 1. THE most distinctive peculiarity of the inductive method is the great intellectual value which it attaches to "particulars," or specific facts. All the definitions of induction agree in regarding it as the process by which general propositions are formed from particular instances. What is called "the inexorable logic of facts" has determined the character of modern research. All facts, however trifling and wherever found, are by it held to be the effect of some cause, or the expression of some principle or law, and therefore to have a doctrinal significance, whether we have discovered it or not. Newton said on a memorable occasion, to which special reference will be made hereafter, "There is no reasoning against facts and experiments." * "I was a very lively imaginative person," said Faraday, "and could believe in the 'Arabian Nights' as easily as in the 'Encyclopædia;' but facts were important to me. I could trust a fact, and always cross-examined an assertion." "For my part, I think that as facts are the foundation of

* Brewster's "Life of Newton," vol. ii. p. 381, n.

science, however they may be interpreted, so they are most valuable, and often more so than the interpretations founded upon them." *

§ 2. Such is the testimony of two of the most successful cultivators of physical science; but so important is the point in question to the purpose I have in view, that I will add words to the same effect taken from two other writers who represent widely divergent tendencies of thought. The first of these quotations is from Mr. J. S. Mill. He says: "We are born into a world which we have not made; a world whose phenomena take place according to fixed laws of which we do not bring any knowledge into the world with us. In such a world we are appointed to live, and in it all our work is to be done. Our whole working power depends upon our knowing the laws of the world; in other words, the properties of the things we have to work with, and to work among, and to work upon. . . . Facts are the materials of our knowledge, but the mind itself is the instrument: and it is easier to acquire facts than to judge what they prove, and how, through the facts which we know, we get to those which we want to know." † And Dr. Newman, before he became a Roman Catholic, speaking of what he calls mere theories in theology which ought to be discarded by serious men, says: "We must give up our ideal notions and resign ourselves to facts. We must take

* Gladstone's "Michael Faraday," pp. 65, 94.

† Mill's Inaugural Address at St. Andrews, p. 21.

things as we find them, as God has given them. We did not make them, we cannot alter them, though we are sometimes tempted to think it very hard that we cannot. We must submit to them, instead of quarrelling with them. We must submit to the indirectness of Scripture, unless we think it wiser and better to become Romanists: and we must employ our minds rather (if so be) in *accounting* for the fact, than in excepting against it.”*

§ 3. These words serve to mark how deep and universal is the change which has come over the spirit of research in modern times. Facts are now accepted on all hands as giving a knowledge of scientific truth. And if this is true, it implies, in regard to all inductive knowledge—that is to say, in regard to all knowledge inductively obtained—the two following things: first, that facts (whether they are objects in space or events in time) can only enter into experience as “particulars,” one by one; and, secondly, that, in the order of time or historical sequence, facts come before principles. In other words, scientific truths are obtained by the study of individual objects and events, and we become acquainted with the principles of things by the investigation of the particular instances in which those principles are exhibited in the actual phenomena of the world.

§ 4. To us all this now appears so obvious, that I may be asked why I have thought it worth while to spend so many words upon it. My

* “*Tracts for the Times*,” No. 85, p. 26.

answer is, that, unfortunately for mankind, the schoolmen, who presided over the intellectual condition of Europe during the Middle Ages, taught a very different doctrine. They were accustomed to regard scientific inquiry as essentially consisting in the study of "universals," and laid it down as a rule, that no science can be collected from "particulars"—*singularium nullam dari scientiam*. In their view, all specific facts belong to what is transitory and mundane—mere things of time and sense; whilst science has to do with what is absolute and eternal. If by this they had simply meant, that the great objects of scientific research were the ideas and principles of divine truth which are embodied in the things that are seen and temporal, their doctrine would have been unimpeachable. But they went on to teach, after the manner of the Platonists, that the only way in which science is to be reached is through the medium of "intelligible species," existing not in external facts but in the intellect itself; and that by the aid of these innate conceptions the knowledge of the actual world could be evolved by deductive reasoning alone; very much as a person, endowed with a vivid imagination and acute logical powers, possessed of the simple ideas of space and number, might work out for himself, independently of all external reality, the whole system of mathematical truth.*

* The Nominalists were in this respect no better than the Realists. Hallam says: "The disputations of the schools might be technically

§ 5. The main error of these great men consisted, I think, in mistaking the order of creation for the order of discovery. In creation, the mind begins with principles, or typical forms, or ideal conceptions; it then proceeds to give expression to these in manifold special instances or facts; or, in technical language, it proceeds from generals to particulars. In discovery, on the contrary, this order is reversed. We first encounter the concrete facts or examples in which the creative thought has been expressed; we compare these examples among themselves, and by provisional guesses or hypotheses endeavour to seize their formative law or idea; or, still in technical language, we proceed from particulars to generals. The schoolmen seem entirely to have mistaken one of these processes for the other, and so they made it their business to create a world for themselves, by logical deduction, out of preconceived notions of their own minds, instead of seeking to interpret the actual world as God made it for man's use and discipline.

§ 6. Now as all inductive knowledge is obtained by observation, and must therefore necessarily begin with particular objects and events, the error of the schoolmen had the effect of closing up the pathway of inductive inquiry altogether; for correct; but so little regard was paid to objective truth, or at least so little pains taken to ascertain it, that no advance in real knowledge signalled either of these parties of dialecticians. According, indeed, to a writer of this age, strongly attached to the Aristotelian party, Ramus had turned all physical science into the domain of logic, and argued from words to things still more than his opponents."—Hallam, "Literary History of Europe," vol. ii. p. 368).

whilst the truths which it is the object of induction to discover are general truths, it is precisely through particular facts that it seeks them, and it is by particular facts that it tests their validity when found. In this way, the progress of inductive science was arrested for many sterile ages by the influence of a false philosophy. It is impossible to say how many truths there are of which we are ignorant, merely because this single error was enforced upon the world by the sanction and authority of those, who undertook the intellectual guidance of the human mind.

§ 7. So completely has this fallacy disappeared from physical inquiry, that it is not easy to believe that it ever existed. Yet it is needful to recall the fact of its former prevalence ; since it is only by considering the reality of the errors which had to be conquered, that we can properly understand the nature of the deliverance which has been effected. The great service which Bacon rendered to the cause of science was his teaching that knowledge is to be gained by looking out of self into things, and that before we can apply general principles to the interpretation of Nature we must first collect those principles by induction from the facts of Nature, and so see Nature in her own light. Instead of determining, out of the depths of our own consciousness, what the world must be, he would have men use their faculties to find out by observation and experiment what it really is. " Unless men choose," he writes, " to move always in a

circle, without advancing, we have but one simple method left, namely, that of leading them to particulars, to their order and connection. They must be contented, for a time at least, to forsake their own notions and become acquainted with things themselves." "Our method," he adds, "has some resemblance to that of the sceptics at the outset, but differs widely from it, and is directly opposed to it, in the end. They foolishly assert that nothing can be known; we say that little is to be expected from the existing method; they contradict reason and common sense; we endeavour to assist both." *

§ 8. The effect of such teaching, and of the practical exemplifications of it in the labours of the great physicists of the age, was to lead men to seek for truth not in the text-books of the schools, but in the very things in which God had Himself put it—botany in plants, astronomy in the stars, chemistry in the material elements of the world, and so of everything besides. It will be a happy day for mankind when, in like manner, they are led to seek for Christianity in Christ Himself, and not

* According to the Syllabus, however (sect. 18), and the teaching of Cardinal Manning, the Church of Rome is by no means prepared to abandon this error. "The scholastic method still held, and holds to this day, its ascendancy. And that because it represents the intellectual process of the Church, elaborating through a period of many centuries an exact conception of revealed truth. The scholastic method can never cease to be true, just as logic can never cease to be true, because it is the intellectual order of revealed truths in their mutual relations, harmony, and unity. To depreciate it is to show that we do not understand it."—"The Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost," p. 106.

merely in the dogmatic theology and creeds of the Church, in the poetry of Dante and Milton and of the hymn-writers, or even in the experience of saints and martyrs—precious as all these are in their proper place.

§ 9. The progress of inductive inquiry has served to bring into ever-increasing clearness the great and fundamental distinction which exists between facts and their scientific interpretation; between truth and knowledge; between concrete reality and the great principles which underlie it; between things as they are and our intellectual apprehension of their meaning. Science does not create the facts which it strives to explain. Things may exist thousands of years before they come to our knowledge; and thousands more of years may pass away, after they are known as facts, before their full significance is comprehended by the human mind. The world is full of unwritten history, which is effectively living on into the present, although both the events themselves have found no record in books, nor are in any way recognised by learned men. And there are events which have been preserved to us in definite records, which when duly interpreted will be found to connect themselves with the future destiny of mankind. Among the last may be classed the facts of Christianity, to which I now proceed to direct attention.*

* Bishop Butler says: "Knowledge presupposes truth, but does not constitute it."

CHAPTER III.

OF THE CHRISTIAN FACTS.

§ 1. THE scientific value of particular facts, in the investigation of the material world, has been so fully vindicated by the results of modern research that it is never likely again to be called in question. But in proceeding to speak of the facts of Christianity, we pass into a region so different from the material world that we cannot be sure, off-hand, that an intellectual method, which has been found of so much use in dealing with the unconscious forces of nature, will not break down altogether when we attempt to employ it in the interpretation of phenomena which are the products of moral agency.

§ 2. In endeavouring to arrive at a right conclusion in this matter it is of great importance to recall the fact that Christianity, in the sense in which I am speaking of it, is neither the ecclesiastical nor the scholastic product which sometimes passes under the name; but is a divine reality which took historic form more than eighteen hundred years ago, and which was embodied in one human life, spent in the world in which we are ourselves living, in a country which is to-day within

easy reach of travellers from our own land, at a well-ascertained period of time, and under definite conditions of personal, social, political, and ecclesiastical existence. The original objective faith of the Church, or, in other words, "the things most surely believed" by the first Christians, were "the things which Jesus began, both to do and to teach, until the day that he was taken up." This faith is still preserved to us in its primitive form in the "particulars"—that is to say, in the specific information—recorded in the narratives of the Four Evangelists.*

§ 3. As so understood, Christianity not only *has* a history but *is* a history, a history to begin with, as the very form in which it has, once for all, been adequately presented to mankind as an objective faith. Its doctrines were not brought into the world by Christ as a set of abstract propositions or theological statements, which would have been as true in any other lips as in His; but as a divine life, spent in the world under real human conditions, and made up of facts and experiences, which, however neglected for a time, or inadequately interpreted by us, can never be again torn out of the fabric of human history. Once become matter of fact, there is no power in existence that can obli-

* Hence the significance of the following passage, which places Christianity in the very midst of the great stream of human history: "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came," &c. (Luke iii. 1).

terate the past, so as to make it not to have been. And human life is thus permanently made so much richer in possibility, than it was before, by how much that one life has brought into it. To interpret that life and to trace its relation to the destiny of mankind is the great business of Christian inquiry. "Christ came," says Dr. J. Harris, "less to preach salvation than to procure it; to make known redemption, not by a verbal and detailed announcement of its plan, but by a visible accomplishment of its conditions; to be the gospel, and to make it. He came to supply the facts out of which the evangelical doctrines are deduced, and which must philosophically precede them. For what is the doctrinal part of the Gospel but the exposition of these facts? their transplantation out of the historical or external world into the intellectual or spiritual." *

§ 4. In physical inquiry, facts are obtained by observation and experiment, and the process of collecting them is often attended with great difficulty and toil. This arises from various causes. 1. Sometimes, facts are so diversified and confused as to baffle every attempt to select from among the multitude those which are available for scientific use. 2. At other times, facts can only be obtained at rare intervals, and demand patient waiting for their occurrence; and even then the opportunity is often lost by the intervention of counteracting causes, as when a transit of Venus or a total eclipse

* Harris's "Great Teacher," preface, p. 11.

of the sun is hidden by clouds. 3. Sometimes, research is attended with considerable risk, as when the explosion of a retort endangered the sight of Davy, and when Richman was killed by the electricity drawn by his gnomon from the thunder-cloud. 4. And, finally, experiments must frequently be devised which demand for their accomplishment a great expenditure of imaginative skill and executive ability. Such are the hard conditions attending the collection of the raw materials for inductive generalisation in physical science.

§ 5. It is altogether different with the facts of Christianity. These are of a very definite character, and are not far to seek. They are all given us in the writings of the New Testament. The record of them is always within our reach. In order to bring them under examination we have neither to perform some long journey, nor to incur any great expense, nor to wait for some rare opportunity. The case is such that we may apply to it the language of St. Paul, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." *

§ 6. It may seem that this easy way of obtaining our facts is balanced by a considerable disadvantage to the evidence of Christianity. In physical science, the objects of research are actually present to our senses. In a large number of cases we are able to place bodies in contact with one another, and to ascertain their behaviour by personal obser-

* Rom. x. 8.

vation of the effects which result from the contact; and we can repeat the process as often as we please. This is experiment. But even where experiment is not available (as with the motions of the planets), we can employ observation, and see the facts for ourselves. In Christian inquiry, neither observation nor experiment is now possible. Christ is no more in the world. He can no longer be questioned by human lips, or subjected to any new condition of behaviour, of utterance, or of endurance. What we call Christian experience consists in subjective consciousness, not in bringing Christ into new forms of objective revelation.

§ 7. That the facts of Christianity are in the past, and cannot now be verified by our own personal observation or experiment, has been generally regarded as placing them altogether out of the range of inductive inquiry. If this were true it would be fatal to the design of this essay. But it is by no means true. Facts are facts, and are fitted for inductive treatment in whatever way they may happen to come to our knowledge. Experiment is not essential to induction. The most advanced of all the sciences is astronomy, and yet in astronomy we are dependent on observation alone, since we cannot try experiments upon the stars. And as to experience, whether resulting from observation or tentative operation, it is agreed on all hands that it includes not our own personal experience alone, but the recorded experience of all persons whatsoever. That the Christian facts

really took place is the only matter that concerns us; and this must be determined by the rules of historical evidence. When the inquirer is once satisfied that the Gospels are really true, and contain a trustworthy account of the life of Christ, he may use them as the materials upon which the process of inductive generalisation may be as legitimately employed, as if he had witnessed them himself.

§ 8. By those who believe in the divine origin of Christianity, the facts of the Gospel are regarded as having taken place under special providential supervision, and the results secured to have been of a perfectly definite and normal character. The adjustments of the moral conditions under which the kingdom of God was to be introduced into the world involved problems of far deeper interest and difficulty than those which were contained in the order of the material creation. Our Lord's advent was the letting down of a lamp to test the moral atmosphere of the world, and thereby the thoughts of many hearts were to be revealed; and the persons so tested became, in their turn, the instruments of His manifold self-revelation in word and deed and suffering. The carrying out of the divine experiment depended upon a perfect knowledge of what was in man, so that every agent should be brought into action at the right moment of time, and no disturbing element, no irrelevant circumstance should be permitted to obtrude itself into the process. The world into

which He came was not the world of this man or that man, but of humanity at large ; and therefore it was needful that the persons who surrounded Him, and whose presence was in any way to be subservient to the evolution of the Gospel history, should be representative men. No type of human character could be excluded from a work in which the whole race was interested. All the agents in the history, whether siding with Him or against Him, were instruments in God's hands to bring about a divine result, even whilst acting as moral agents according to their true character ; and they were responsible for the part they took. This is expressed in the words of St. Peter, "Him [Jesus of Nazareth], being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." And again, "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." *

§ 9. The events of the Gospel, having taken place under such conditions of divine regulation and control, have this further peculiarity, namely, that they took place (*ἄπαξ*) once for all ; inasmuch as they partake in the moral world, of the definitive nature of those single experimental demonstrations which are held to be sufficient to establish a universal principle. For example, when a single

* Acts ii. 23 ; iv. 27, 28.

diamond has been burnt it is enough to prove for ever (or at least as long as the present physical constitution of the world remains unchanged) that the diamond is combustible; and the experiment is too costly to be unnecessarily repeated.* But the case is much stronger when the experiment involves the suffering of sentient creatures. "I hold," says Sir T. Watson, speaking of vivisection, "that no teacher, or man of science, who, by his own previous experiments, or by his absolute knowledge of trustworthy and conclusive experiments made by others, has thoroughly satisfied himself of the solution of any physiological problem, is justified in repeating the experiments, however mercifully they may be conducted, or even in taking away the animal's life merely to appease the natural curiosity of a class of students or of scientific friends and acquaintances; still less for the sake of display or self-glorification."† It is strictly along the same line of thought, but at an infinite distance on the way, that we approach the mysterious agony of Gethsemane, and the bitter passion of the cross, by which the problem of the

* "When a chemist announces the existence and properties of a newly discovered substance, if we confide in his accuracy we feel assured that the conclusions he has arrived at will hold universally, although the induction be founded but on a single instance. We do not withhold our assent, waiting for a repetition of the experiment; or if we do, it is from a doubt whether the one experiment was properly made, not whether, if properly made, it would be conclusive. Here, then, is a general law of nature, inferred without hesitation from a single instance; a universal proposition from a singular one."—Mill's "Logic," vol. i. p. 380, first ed.

† *Contemporary Review*, May 1875, p. 868.

world's salvation has once for all been solved, and is never to be opened afresh. It is not needful "that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."* We are expressly told in the Epistle to the Hebrews that "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all," and that "by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."†

§ 10. Events, which at first sight appear to be of little interest, are sometimes found to rise into unexpected importance, in a scientific point of view, by serving to reveal some great principle which men had failed to detect in more imposing phenomena. In the study of the Gospel, no less than in other departments of research, it is impossible to foresee what light even the smallest recorded fact may furnish. It is not only those great events which have found a place in the creeds of the Church, but every event and every utterance of the Saviour, that must be allowed to contribute its share to our knowledge of His character and teaching. Even the negative facts, as they may be called (such, for example, as His having left behind Him no written document), must be taken into account.

* Heb. ix. 25, 26.

† Heb. x. 10, 14.

§ 11. As the Gospel is an historical reality, and not a mere literary product, it is needful to distinguish between the events as they actually occurred, and the written documents in which they are presented to us;—between the real Gospel and the literary form of it. The written text does not create the facts it records. The facts would be facts, even though no memory of them had been committed to writing, and they would remain facts, inwrought into the life of the world, if every written document were destroyed in a universal conflagration. The very diversity found to exist between one Evangelist and another, tends to throw us back upon the pre-existent reality of the facts, and to preserve us from turning the mere literary presentment of them into an idol. It is the reality of the facts, that makes the record of them so precious. Discredit the facts, and the Gospel must then be regarded as only the product of human genius, more wonderful it may be than the Republic of Plato, or the Iliad, or the plays of Shakespeare, or the “Paradise Lost,” but no longer a divine covenant which is founded upon moral principles, and has already passed out of a condition of mere purpose and prophecy, into a condition of concrete reality in our Lord’s life.*

* “But, as in every historical subject, when I contemplated the immeasurable gulf between the narrative and the facts narrated, this [discrepancy between one Gospel and another] distracted me no further. He whose earthly life and sorrows were depicted had for me a personal real existence, and His whole history had the same reality, even if it were not related with literal exactness in any single point.”—Niebuhr’s “Life and Letters,” vol. i. p. 839.

§ 12. But whilst observing this distinction between the facts of the Gospel and the written records of the facts, I must point out the special adaptation of the inspired narratives of the Evangelists to the purposes of inductive inquiry. In Christianity as well as in physics, all facts, however well-authenticated, are not of equal scientific value. Some facts are so much like others that it may be quite unnecessary to notice them. Some exhibit a principle in its most simple form; others present it under a combination of various circumstances. Now the work of Christ is the product of a few great principles of eternal truth and righteousness, and the design of the written Gospels is to bring those principles within the reach of our faith and apprehension. For this purpose it was not necessary that every word and act of Christ should be preserved in writing. It is one of the peculiarities of the inductive method, that it undertakes to discover general truths without an exhaustive enumeration of details. All that it requires for its process of inference is that it shall be furnished with representative facts, or facts so selected as adequately to express the ideas or principles which they serve to exemplify. These representative facts are what Bacon calls "prerogative instances," by which term he "understands characteristic phenomena, selected from the great miscellaneous mass of facts which occur in nature, and which by their number, indistinctness, and complication tend rather to confuse than to direct the mind in the

search after causes and general heads of induction. Phenomena so selected on account of some peculiarly forcible way in which they strike the reason, and impress us with a kind of sense of causation, or a particular aptitude for generalisation, he considers, and justly, as holding a kind of prerogative dignity, and claiming our first and special attention in physical inquiries."* The Gospels are precisely of this character. Their inspiration is seen almost as much in their silence as in their utterance. They are records of selected facts. They do not claim to be complete lives of Christ according to any ordinary sense of biographical narrative. The information which would gratify curiosity is often entirely wanting. The chronological order is sometimes difficult to trace, great blanks occur, and the whole record is presented in a space so brief as to be contained in one small volume. And so it is stated at the end of St. John's Gospel, "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." And again, "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."†

§ 13. Whether, in the future, any fresh facts

* Herschel's "Discourse on Natural Philosophy," p. 181.

† John xx. 30, 31; xxi. 25.

bearing upon our Lord's life may be brought to light from the buried past, and established by sufficient evidence, it is impossible to decide. But there is one fact, not recorded in either of the Four Gospels, preserved to us in the Acts of the Apostles. It consists in the utterance of a seeming paradox in the conduct of human life, as characteristic of our Lord's teaching as any of the Beatitudes which form the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount. The words occur in the address of St. Paul to the elders of the Church at Ephesus, "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." *

§ 14. It is important to observe that Christianity, as a divine revelation, consists not only in specific facts, but also in general truths and authoritative commands. Now, as specific facts alone furnish us with the original materials for induction, it is evident that all such general truths and authoritative commands must be accepted as premises adapted for deductive reasoning, independently of any foregoing induction. The necessity for induction is in this case superseded by authority. At the same time it must be remarked that many of the instructions and precepts of Christ are not expressed in general or abstract terms, but are given in a form so specific and literal, so limited to the occasion and circumstances existing at the moment of their utterance, that till we catch their spirit—or, in other words, till we generalise them,

* Acts xx. 35.

and ascertain the principles involved in them—they cannot be brought into deductive use in the changed conditions of modern life. To this class belong many of the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, a literal compliance with which would serve to show that the letter killeth, and that it is the spirit that giveth life. But when our Lord's doctrines and commands take a general form, as for example in the words, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another," they have a right to take their place as universal truths grounded not upon induction, but upon authority. When principles are thus obtained by divine authority, the deductive use of them to establish particular truths is to be regarded, according to Mr. J. S. Mill, as a search for truth through the medium of an inquiry into the meaning of a form of words. The only point to be determined in any particular case is whether the author of the command intended it to apply to that case or not. "This is a question," as the Germans express it, "of hermeneutics ; it relates to the meaning of a certain form of discourse. The operation is not a process of inference, but a process of interpretation."*

§ 15. Even when a doctrine or precept of Christ takes the form of a general truth, there is one point of view in which it may still be regarded as a particular fact. Mr. J. S. Mill says of a supernaturally revealed law that it may not be, in the ordinary sense, an assertion at all, but a

* Mill's "Logic," bk. ii. chap. iii. sect. 4; first ed.

command ; a law not in the philosophical, but in the moral and political sense of the term ; an expression of the desire of a superior, that we, or any number of other persons, shall conform our conduct to certain general instructions. So far as this asserts a fact, namely, a volition of the Legislator, that fact is an individual fact, and the proposition therefore is not a general proposition. But the description therein contained, of the conduct which it is the will of the Legislator that His subjects should observe, is general. The proposition asserts, not that all men *are* anything, but that all men *shall* do something.*

§ 16. As the object I have in view in this essay is confined to the consideration of an intellectual method of inquiry, it does not lie in my way to speak of the higher uses of the Christian facts, those which relate to the æsthetic and religious tendencies of our nature. The qualities of the heart are so much more precious than those of the head, that intellectual clearness can only be truly valued, when it is seen to be subservient to the improvement of human character ; and character depends far more on right feeling than on clear thought. But then it must be remembered, that all conscious feeling has in it an element of thought ; and if the thought is false, the feeling which accompanies it must so far be wrong. Our fears and hopes, our love and hate in religion, are often excited by false notions of divine things ; and we can scarcely

* Mill's " Logic."

doubt that they would be more virtuously exercised if the notions were true instead of false. I cannot believe that ignorance is the mother of devotion, although devout feeling may appear most earnest when free from moral and intellectual control. To know God aright cannot spoil the efficacy of our prayers, or in any way pervert the flow of our affections, or our Lord would never have uttered that intercessory prayer for His disciples: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." *

* John xvii. 17.

CHAPTER IV.

OF FACTS AS A MEANS OF EXPRESSING THOUGHT.

§ 1. In the foregoing chapter I have anticipated, by implication at least, some things which must now be stated more distinctly. It will already have become apparent that, if the method of induction begins with specific facts, it does not end with them, but aims constantly, through them, to reach onward to transcendental and universal truths. Indeed the greatest if not the only reason why it attaches so much value to facts is the belief that, transient as they are in themselves, they represent ideas and principles which are divine and permanent. It proceeds upon the assumption that everything in nature has a meaning; although "meaning" finds no place in that famous classification of all the objects of knowledge which goes by the name of the categories of Aristotle. And it has satisfied itself, by the sure demonstration of actual experience, that science *can* be collected from particulars, notwithstanding the assertion of the schoolmen to the contrary.

§ 2. That thought exists in the world as an

objective reality,* is as certain as that electricity exists, or gravitation, or heat, or life itself. Thought is distinct from all other principles, and has its own special forms of manifestation, by which it is differentiated from all other phenomena. When thought originates with our own minds we are conscious of it directly and without the intervention of any material symbols; and then, by analogy, we attribute a similar faculty of solitary thought to every one among the millions of our fellow-men. The actual intercourse of minds only takes place by the employment of external signs of some kind or other, addressed to the senses, such as speech, or writing, or picture, or facial expression, or gesture, or symbolic act. If all the elements of the material world were withdrawn from intellectual use, individual minds would, so far as this world is concerned, be brought into a condition of absolute isolation and solitude; all our books would be reduced to mere dead matter; all meaning would go out of human speech, and the traffic of the intellectual world would be brought to a stand. Matter does not think; but without matter as the vehicle of thought we should be reduced to a condition of mere animal existence.

§ 3. How a combination can be brought about between things so heterogeneous as thought and

* I use the phrase, "objective reality," as the antithesis of "subjective reality," and I apply it to thought which does not originate with ourselves, and which exists apart from our consciousness, in whatever form it finds material expression.

matter, is very mysterious ; and yet, not God only, but every human being can perform the process. I am at this moment employed in doing so. This pen, and ink, and paper are the materials I employ for the purpose. These I have slowly learned to manipulate ; and, by the observance of certain rules of grammar and logic, I can so arrange my materials as to make them depositories of thoughts, which other minds can apprehend and think over again as truly as if they were their own. To the mere sense of a reader ignorant of the English language, the writing may possibly convey no meaning at all ; but the meaning is there notwithstanding. He may, at first, see nothing but little crooked strokes made up of particles of matter. And yet he may gradually come to understand the language in which I am writing ; and then he will be able, by a mental process of his own, to take up the thought which I have put into it. He is not the original creator of the thought, and yet his mind, by its plastic power, can reproduce my thought more or less truly out of the symbols or material forms in which I have presented it. How the thought gets into the symbols is a profound mystery—as all natural processes are—and how it gets out again into other minds is a mystery equally profound ; * and yet it is by such

* “ Although by the constitution of our nature certain sensations are rendered the constant antecedents of our perceptions, yet it is just as difficult to explain how our perceptions are obtained by their means, as it would be upon the supposition that the mind were all at once inspired with them without any concomitant sensations whatever.”—Stewart's “ *Philosophy of the Human Mind*,” part i. chap. i. sect. 8.

processes that, everywhere and all day long, the fellowship of souls is constantly maintained, and the thoughts of the great minds of the race are circulated for the common good.

§ 4. What verbal language, whether written or spoken, is in the intercourse between human minds, *that* the material universe is between the mind of God and the mind of man—a vehicle of divine ideas. Viewed simply in regard to mechanical and structural design, the world is a glorious display of God's creative power and wisdom; but is it not much more than this—is it not a revelation of "the thoughts of His heart"? "There is," says Bishop Berkeley, "a certain analogy, constancy, and uniformity in the phenomena or appearances of nature, which are the foundation for general rules; and these are a grammar for the understanding of nature, or that series of effects in the visible world whereby we are enabled to foresee what will come to pass in the natural course of things. Plotinus observes, in his third *Æneid*, that the art of presaging is in some sort the reading of natural letters denoting order, and that, so far forth as analogy obtains in the universe, there may be vaticination. And in reality he that foretells the motions of the planets, or the effects of medicines, or the results of chemical or mechanical experiments, may be said to do it by natural vaticination." "We know a thing when we understand it, and we understand it when we can interpret it or

tell what it signifies. Strictly, the sense knows nothing. We perceive, indeed, sounds by hearing, and characters by sight; but we are not therefore said to understand them. After the same manner the phenomena of nature are alike visible to all; but all have not alike learned the connection of natural signs or understand what they signify or how to vaticinate by them." "As the natural connection of signs with the things signified is regular and constant, it forms a sort of natural discourse, and is therefore the immediate effect of an intelligent cause." * Out of the elements of nature as a living alphabet, God has composed that marvellous book of the creatures which ever renews itself out of its own decay in the view of men, and by the study of which they come to share His thoughts.

§ 5. Of all the objects which make up the visible universe, by far the most complex and the most full of divine significance is man himself. Man is of all natural objects the highest revelation of divine thought. The laws of human nature—physical, intellectual, and moral—are as really divine as are the laws of the material universe. All the problems involved in human life, whether individual or social, were present to the mind of God when He created man in His own image and endowed him with all his wondrous apparatus of faculty and all his possibility of attainment. "Thine eyes," says the Psalmist, "did see my substance, yet

* Bishop Berkeley's "Siris," secs. 252, 253, and 254.

being unperfect; and in thy book all my members . . . were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!"* In this view, human nature is a revelation of God given in "particulars." Nothing that comes out in human life is mere matter of chance or dead fact, terminating in itself. It comes from God, and leads back to God.

§ 6. It is true, indeed, that whilst human nature in all its original elements is the creation of God, human character, so far at least as it is the result of voluntary action, is the creation of man; so that the history of mankind is the joint product of divine and human agency. In all our exercises of thought, of conscience, of will, of affection, of passion, of hope, we are using faculties which God has bestowed, and the laws of whose action God has determined, and not we. To this view of the case we shall have to return shortly. The point now before us is that human nature is a divine revelation embodied in particular persons and assuming definite expression under various conditions of time and place, of age, of rank, of office, of talent, of motive, of temptation; and that these facts will, when subjected to inductive investigation, yield up general ideas and laws, just as do the facts of the material world. And I will add that the place of such facts can never be supplied by the agitation of our own minds, or by any

* Psa. cxxxix. 16, 17.

process of logical deduction, in the one case any more than in the other.

§ 7. Thus it will appear that we are not only the beings who think, but are also one of the objects about which we think. But then it must be observed that our individual consciousness is not coextensive with human nature—it is not even coextensive with our own personal being. We *are* so much more than we know ourselves to be. We exist long before we become conscious of existence, and we continue to exist during the suspension of consciousness, as in sleep. Besides this, human nature exists beyond our consciousness in millions of other men; and the experience of other men belongs as really to human nature as does our own experience; and the experience of other men, especially of those who stand out as bearing a representative character, may be far more normal and characteristic than our own, and may therefore have a far better right than our own to be taken into account in our investigation into human nature. When it is said that “the proper study of mankind is man,” and that the maxim “know thyself” “came down from heaven,” we are not to suppose that self-knowledge is only to be learned by each man studying human nature in the sample of it which makes up his own personality. All around us in the wide world there is the constant play of the wonderful powers of human thought, passion, and conscience; really human, though not our own. To study humanity

in other men is, perhaps, more likely to help us to a true knowledge of our own nature than all the earnest introspection upon which so much of our mental strength has hitherto been wasted. It is by looking out of ourselves and contemplating the lives of others that we learn the possibilities of our own nature, whether for evil or good, in forms which the penury of our personal experience does not furnish. What I see in another may be to me an utterly new excellency in human nature, and yet as truly belonging to human nature as the commonest endowments of sight or speech. And I wish especially to say that till we have learned to see ourselves in Christ (to use St. Paul's expression) we do not know to what we have been predestined in the divine purpose hereafter actually to become.

§ 8. It must also be observed that although the facts of human nature are of a far more complex character than the facts of the material world, yet there are two compensating advantages which enable us to become the interpreters of man in a far deeper sense than we can ever become the interpreters of nature. These are, first, the existence of personal sympathy; and, secondly, the possibility of intellectual intercommunication through the medium of language. (1) As to human sympathy, every man is another self to all his fellows. When Bradford, the martyr, stood at his window in Holborn and saw the malefactor on his way to execution at Tyburn, and exclaimed,

"There goes John Bradford but for the grace of God," he was but exemplifying the principle which enables us to see in other men the possible forms of our own character.* And (2) as we have so much more in common with our fellow-men than we have with any other creature in the world, so we have a method of communication with them which is altogether wanting in our study of tree or flower or star. There is between us and our fellow-men (while life lasts) a capacity of self-revelation carried on in personal questions and personal answers. It is not much we know even of ourselves; and so we cannot, even if we would, tell all we are. But when any new discovery is made, whether in our physical or intellectual constitution, it cannot fail speedily to become the common property of the race.

§ 9. We saw in the preceding chapters that Christianity has taken its place in the world in the form of human life under specific conditions of time and place and social relations. What we have now to observe is that whilst this historical Christianity served to reveal human nature, it was at the same time the supreme revelation of the mind of God. By the incarnation and work

* "There is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same, and to all of the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the whole estate. What Plato has thought, he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand. Who hath access to this universal mind is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only and sovereign agent."—Emerson's "Essay on History."

of Christ the divine thought has received its highest expression. And this is true, not only of our Lord's personal actions, but also of those events in His life in which He suffered from the agency of others. Our Lord's crucifixion, for example, is represented as really a divine, as it was a human transaction; and not the less divine, because so much of human passion and sin entered into the circumstances which attended and preceded it. The divine meaning of that great event altogether transcended the thought of the human agents who combined to accomplish it. All the facts of the Gospel partake of the same divine character, and have even a higher intellectual use than the facts of nature; and as these facts took place within the sphere of the human world and under the play of human sympathies and antipathies, we cannot but feel that the right interpretation of them concerns us far more deeply and lies far nearer to the moral ends of life than does the right interpretation of any of the phenomena of the material world. God hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things. The facts of the Gospel are therefore, like all other facts, subject to that same method of intellectual treatment by which we have learned, since the downfall of the scholastic method, to collect great principles of divine truth from particular objects and events. The reality of the Gospel facts as a divine revelation justifies the use of induction in their interpretation.

§ 10. The communication of ideas and principles to the mind through the medium of particular facts is indirect and circuitous; but it has a peculiar fitness to our condition as persons under a process of intellectual and moral discipline. If God's design had been simply to convey certain ideas in the easiest possible manner to the mind, without any painful effort on our part, we should have been spared the slow and laborious journey of inductive thought. As it is, the process by which we advance in our intellectual researches, involves in it a moral schooling; so that character is developed whilst truth is accumulated. "Of the knowledge which contemplate the works of nature," says Bacon, "the holy philosopher hath said expressly that the glory of God is to conceal a thing, but the glory of the king is to find it out; as if the Divine nature, according to the innocent and sweet play of children which hide themselves to the end they may be found, took delight to hide His works, to the end they might be found out, and, of His indulgence and goodness to mankind, had chosen the soul of man to be His playfellow in this game."*

* "De Augmentis," preface, p. 19. Wat's translation.

CHAPTER V.

THE FORMATION OF INDUCTIVE IDEAS.

§ 1. ASSUMING, then, that all things and events have in them a divine significance, it deeply concerns us to ask in what way or by what mental processes we may best succeed in discovering the true interpretation of the various facts which are presented to our view, both in the material world and in human life and history, and especially in the phenomena of Christianity.

§ 2. The knowledge which is requisite for the preservation of our bodily life is scarcely to be distinguished from the spontaneous instinct of animals. But then it is knowledge and not mere instinct. And it implies that the world has for us an intellectual as well as a physical use. A certain amount of conscious mental activity is called into operation the moment we endeavour to form a true notion of the simplest object presented to the senses. We never see the whole of anything at once ; we have to form the idea of it out of several distinct and successive impressions made upon the eye by turning the object about and examining it on every side. Even so simple a thing as a grain of sand

has always one hemisphere away from the eye ; and, in turning it round to see the other half, the half first in view passes out of sight and becomes an object of memory, however short the interval of time employed in the act. To obtain a complete image of the object we must combine the successive perceptions of sight by some mental process in which memory, imagination, and inference are employed, although the work may be so rapid as to escape our notice. The ideas thus formed are really products of our own minds.

§ 3. It is even possible that a process of moral discipline, with its trials and the penalties of mistake, may be found to connect itself with the simplest of our mental combinations. We may easily be led into wrong conduct by forming our ideas on a one-sided view of things. There is a legend which tells of two knights who, on approaching each other in opposite directions, saw a shield suspended in such a manner that to one it presented a face of silver and to the other a face of gold. One insisted that the shield was all gold, and the other that it was all silver. Neither of them took the trouble to examine the opposite side, or would believe that his opponent was speaking truth as to what actually met his view. They at length became so enraged that they challenged each other to mortal combat, and were only hindered from going to extremities by having the true state of the case pointed out to them by a stranger who happened to come to the spot.

§ 4. Our ideas of the figure and composition of things are further modified and enlarged by an investigation into the causes which produced them, into their behaviour when exposed to the action of other things, and into the uses to which they may be applied. In this way the mental activity commenced in the elementary acts of perception is carried forward, and becomes increasingly difficult and complex as higher objects and relations come under observation; and as the possible combinations among the elements of nature are practically inexhaustible, so it is certain that our ideas of things may be constantly enlarged and improved. If, instead of a grain of sand, we were to take a piece of iron, we should find ourselves in presence of an object which has already, besides its mechanical uses, played a very remarkable part in the growth of ideas in the human mind. To the uninformed the idea of a piece of iron ore is simply that of a lump of dull red earth; but, as the mind has learnt to handle it, quite other notions have been added to such early thoughts. "One who has never heard of magnetism," says Sir John Herschel, "has a very different notion of *iron* from one in the contrary predicament. The vulgar who regard this metal as incombustible, and the chemist who sees it burn with the utmost fury, and who has other reasons for regarding it as one of the most combustible bodies in nature; the poet who uses it as an emblem of rigidity, and the smith and engineer, in whose hands it is plastic and moulded like wax

into every form ; the gaoler who prizes it as an obstruction, and the electrician who sees in it only a channel of open communication by which that impassible of obstacles, the air, may be traversed by his imprisoned fluid, have all different, and all imperfect, notions of the same word. The meaning of such a term is like a rainbow : everybody sees a different one, and all maintain it to be the same." *

§ 5. What I most wish to insist upon is that our ideas are not mere mechanical impressions given at once to the mind by external objects as printing types impress paper, or as the mirror receives the picture of the face. We have ourselves a very large share in their formation ; and that, not only when they are the creations of our own fancy, but also when they are most carefully moulded according to the patterns of things in nature. Thoughts which we actually think, are our own, even though they may be the reproduction of thoughts of other minds. Our intellectual faculties are a divine gift, but the voluntary use of those faculties, and the products which result from their voluntary use, are our own. God does not think for us, even when most He helps us to think for ourselves. It is true that thought has its natural laws, and is formed according to determinate principles which do not originate with us, such as are expressed by the words association, abstraction, generalisation, idealisation, and the like, yet it is

* Herschel's " Discourse on Natural Philosophy," p. 20.

truly a product of our own minds, sometimes only slowly growing into definite form by persistent endeavour on our part, always capable of being made more and more conformable to facts, and liable to all the distortions and mistakes arising from bias and defective study. Accordingly Bacon complains that "our notions of things are often not clear notions, but are fantastical and ill-defined, and are improperly abstracted and deduced from facts." *

§ 6. The formation of particular ideas is followed by the giving of names. When we have learned to distinguish between things which differ, we can bestow upon them distinctive appellations. Words are the signs of things, or of our ideas of things. In the invention of these signs we employ a divinely given faculty. When God had once bestowed an aptitude for speech He left it to man to frame the special symbols which should become the vehicle for his thoughts. God did not do for man what He had given him power to do for himself here, any more than in other departments of his life. Thus, whilst the faculty of speech is natural to man, the particular forms of language are artificial and arbitrary. And this has been the divine order from the beginning, and is a further proof that the world was made for the intellectual as well as the physical use of man. "Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them

* "Novum Organum," bk. i. aph. 16.

unto Adam to see what he would call them : and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." *

§ 7. So much for the formation of particular ideas and particular names, as representing particular things. Before we can proceed to give a common name to several individual things (whether acts or objects) we must exercise a still higher mental function, nearly the highest of which we are capable, namely, generalisation. I am at present speaking of ideas, and not of propositions. The generalisation of ideas is founded upon the perception of some property common to an indefinite number of things which otherwise differ from one another. The common names of material things, such as tree, star, bird, may have been given in the first instance to an individual tree, star, or bird ; and then made to stand as a common name for all varieties of trees, stars, or birds. It is the same with those abstract names which express the attributes of persons and things ; such, for example, as hardness, wisdom, mercy, the ideas of which are obtained from the facts and individual experiences of real life. In the formation of such ideas there is a real process of generalisation from particulars. Such ideas once obtained from single examples, are then extended to an indefinite number of other cases, and so a great many facts are collected under one head of classification. Without generalisation there can be no science, for

* Gen. ii. 19.

science does not consist in the knowledge of particular facts, but in the knowledge of those ideas and principles which, being gathered in the first instance from particular facts, will explain thousands of new facts without fresh investigation.

§ 8. The formation of general ideas and names expressive of the attributes of persons and things is preceded by abstraction. The attribute or quality observed in a particular example is first thought of apart from all the other qualities found in connection with it. This is an abstract idea; and the abstract idea becomes general when the quality in question is found to exist in an indefinite number of other persons or things. If, for example, we should observe that water has the property of allowing the rays of light to pass through it, and call that property by the name of transparency, we may, by abstraction, think of the transparency of water without thinking of its chemical composition, or of its refreshing or cleansing properties, or of its statical or dynamic conditions. Then finding that a similar property belongs to other substances differing in many respects from water, we generalise the abstract idea, and apply it to glass, to crystals, to diamonds, and to all other bodies which transmit light. Or we may take an example from Bible history. We find in the character of Abraham a peculiar quality which is called faith; by abstraction we separate the idea of faith from other peculiarities of Abraham, and then this abstract idea we find to be exemplified in numerous other

persons differing from Abraham in almost all respects, such as nationality, temperament, sex, station in life, early education, and the like, as we see in the catalogue of worthies contained in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It will thus appear that to discover any particular quality of an object or the cause of any particular event is one thing, whilst to generalise the quality or the cause is quite another.

§ 9. As true ideas of things are, generally speaking, not formed by direct intuition, and as the causes of events do not spontaneously present themselves to the mind without some effort on our part, there arises the necessity for the use of hypothesis, or tentative thought, in the process of investigation. Our first notions are often nothing more than conjectures or partial approximations to a true interpretation, and then we are obliged to employ repeated endeavours if we would succeed in making our thoughts run into the moulds of things. Such tentative efforts may be nothing more than thoughtful guesses; and yet they call into exercise some of the highest faculties both of our intellectual and moral nature. The creative power of the imagination finds room for its utmost play, whilst there is a call for the exercise of that intellectual self-denial which demands that we give up all our own thoughts to the requirements of truth. If in saying this I appear to be forgetful of the warnings of Bacon against the danger of "anticipating nature," I can only say that no

warning of Bacon's can be of force against a legitimate use of any normal form of our mental activity. There is a moral risk attending the exercise of all our faculties; and the risk in the use of hypothesis consists in the danger of converting our hypotheses into principles of science, instead of holding them as provisional helps to the investigation of truth.*

§ 10. General ideas thus formed according to facts, and by the normal exercise of our intellectual faculties, I shall venture to call inductive ideas, as distinguished from ideas which have been compounded by the human fancy without any reference to divine reality. But in using the term in this way I am not strictly limiting its meaning to the definition sometimes given of induction. For example, Mr. Bain says, induction is the arriving at general propositions by means of observation or fact. And he then proceeds, "In an induction there are three essentials: (1) the result must be a *proposition*—an affirmation of concurrence or non-concurrence, as opposed to a notion; (2) the proposition must be *general*, or applicable to all

* "To try wrong guesses is apparently the only way to hit upon right ones. The character of the true philosopher is, not that he never conjectures hazardingly, but that his conjectures are clearly conceived and brought into rigid contact with facts. He sees and compares distinctly the ideas and the things—the relations of his notions to each other and to phenomena. Under these conditions it is not only excusable, but necessary for him to snatch at every semblance of general rule—to try all promising forms of simplicity and symmetry."—Whewell's "History of the Inductive Sciences," vol. i. p. 378. "What is invention, except the talent of rapidly calling before us many possibilities and selecting the appropriate one?" (p. 411.)

cases of a given kind; (3) the method must be an appeal to *observation* or fact." *

§ 11. Now, in forming ideas in the way I have described, the second and third of these conditions are fulfilled—there is an appeal to facts and there is an act of generalisation; but the first condition is wanting; there is a notion or idea, but there is no proposition; and ideas do not amount to propositions, but only to the terms out of which propositions are constructed. And yet ideas or notions that are true to facts, are to be distinguished from ideas or notions that are merely the product of imagination, (as the idea of *phlogiston*, for example); and the word "inductive" conveys the distinction; and I know no reason why general ideas formed according to observation and fact should not be called inductive ideas, just as general propositions formed according to observation and fact are called inductive propositions. This will satisfy the view of Mr. Mill, who says, "Induction, properly so called, may be summarily defined as generalisation from experience." † Dr. Whewell says, "The familiar act of thought, exercised for the common purposes of life, by which we give to an assemblage of our impressions such a unity as is implied in the notions and terms a month, a year, the sky, and the like, is in reality an inductive act, and shares the nature of the processes by which all sciences are formed." ‡

* Bain's "Logic," vol. ii. p. 1.

† Mill's "Logic," bk. iii. chap. iii. sect. 1.

‡ Whewell's "History of the Inductive Sciences," vol. i. p. 109.

§ 12. The propensity to generalise is said to be the chief characteristic of the philosophic spirit. Perhaps this might be more truly said of that higher intellectual tendency which leads us to form ideal conceptions more perfect than the ideas that are actually embodied in the facts of the external world. These ideals are to be regarded as among the most wonderful products of the human mind. Examples of them, both true and false, may be found in every department of thought. In geometry, the point has no dimensions, and the line no breadth; in mechanics, motion is uniform in velocity and rectilinear in direction, although in reality no such motion exists; in politics, there are such legal fictions as the social contract and the immortality of the king; and in theology, there are the doctrines of predestination and irresistible grace, and the like.

§ 13. The value of such ideal conceptions, as constituent elements of science, was very earnestly insisted on by the late Dr. Whewell. According to him, two things are requisite to the formation of science, namely, facts and ideas; observation of things without, and an effort of thought; or, in other words, sense and reason. Without ideas there could be no science, and the impressions of sense would only end in the practical acquaintance with individual objects. But he distinguishes between the ideas upon which exact science is founded and the common notions of practical life. He says, "Without here attempting

fully to explain this relation, (which indeed is one of the hardest problems of our philosophy), we may observe that they have this in common, that both are acquired by acts of the mind exercised in connecting external impressions, and may be employed in conducting a train of reasoning; or, speaking loosely (for we cannot here pursue the subject so as to arrive at philosophical exactness), we may say, that all notions and ideas are obtained by an inductive, and may be used in a deductive process. But scientific ideas and common notions differ in this, that the former are precise and stable, the latter vague and ambiguous; the former are possessed with clear insight, and employed in a sense rigorously limited, and always identically the same; the latter have grown up in the mind from a thousand diverse and obscure suggestions, and the obscurity and inconsistency of their origin hangs about all their applications. Scientific ideas can often be adequately exhibited for all the purposes of reasoning by means of definitions and axioms; all attempts to reason by means of definition from common notions lead to empty forms or entire confusion." *

§ 14. Ideal conceptions of the kind now mentioned are products of the human mind. They are, however, products founded upon pre-existing types of thought which constitute the great intellectual foundations of the world. The actual phenomena of motion, for example, are always ready to suggest, although they never actually

* Whewell's "History of the Inductive Sciences," vol. i. p. 17.

realise, the ideal principles of motion. In real motion there is always the retarding action of friction, of a resisting medium, and of the deflecting attraction of extraneous force; but the mind, taking the line indicated by the actual phenomena, reaches the ideal conception of pure motion abstracted from all interference and proceeding for ever in one uniform direction and velocity. And so in like manner the ideal point is never realised in any material form. The finest needle-point can do no more than suggest it to the mind. We mentally travel along the diminishing line till we reach the extremity, and there we must take our plunge into the unseen if we would grasp the ideal point of geometry.

§ 15. The mind has a plastic power of its own, and when it has once obtained the simplest elements of thought, it is able, by the processes now indicated, to frame ideas of its own which may have their counterparts in reality, or may be entirely out of harmony with the divine order. It is therefore needful in our interpretation of nature to exercise the most self-denying care lest we should impose our own ideas upon things, and make facts speak only our own thoughts.

§ 16. The perfection of an inductive idea consists in its exact conformity to facts as they actually exist; whilst the perfection of an ideal conception is that it transcends the actual facts of the external world, where it can only find a symbolical representation in material forms.

§ 17. As some, at least, of our ideal conceptions are mere figments of the mind, it is important to ask by what means can true ideals be ascertained to be true ; or, in other words, what evidence have we that there is really, not only an element of thought, but an element of ideal or transcendental thought at the heart of nature ? The most general answer to these questions is that our ideal conceptions, when true, enable us to interpret the actual phenomena of nature. For example, that all material things were made in number, weight, and measure is proved by the fact that by the help of number, weight, and measure—that is to say, by the help of the ideal conceptions of pure mathematics—we are able to ascertain and verify the laws of the material universe. Indeed, without ideal conceptions no exact science can be formed.*

§ 18. But there is to be found in another direction a still more interesting answer to these questions. All art seeks to improve upon nature, and yet the perfection of art consists in its conformity to some ideal standard suggested to the mind by Nature herself. Generally speaking, art uses the dead materials of nature in which to embody its conceptions. Marble, pigments of various kinds, and paper and ink, serve to furnish the sculptor, the artist, and the poet with the passive materials by which they work. But there is one department of art in which we operate on living organisms and not on dead matter, and in which these living

* See Appendix.

organisms are found, under human treatment, to put forth their own vital forces along the lines of our own ideal conceptions of beauty and growth, and to attain a development which they never reach when left to the bare ministry of nature without human co-operation. Many of the fruits and flowers and animals seen in our floral and agricultural shows, are almost as much the productions of human art, as are the pictures and statues seen in the exhibitions of the Royal Academy. The point of distinction between the two classes of productions is that in the former Nature herself joins actively in working towards the artist's ideal; and in this way human ideals, when truly formed, are sanctioned and justified by the warrant of reality and the response of nature.

§ 19. But the highest function of art, is not that which moulds dead matter into forms of beauty, nor that which aims at the improvement of living organisms, but that which seeks the elevation and transformation of human character. Now it is just here that we most need the help of ideal conceptions, transcending the actual experience of our common life. What we want is not only to ascertain exactly what man is, but what he is capable of becoming, and what God has predestined that he shall become in character and attainment. All moral improvement, whether personal or social, implies an ideal perfection towards which we may be ever attracted as the divinely appointed end of our being. Our Christian ideals, when so

used for the purpose of spiritual aspiration and development, are to be regarded as among the most precious of our possessions. What can exceed in inspiration the words which our Lord has addressed as much to the hopes as to the conscience of mankind, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect?"*

§ 20. To sum up the foregoing remarks, God's thoughts constitute the enduring principles upon which the very being and stability of the world depend; and when we come into possession of them we obtain command over all the forces of nature. By taking God's thoughts as our thoughts we are enabled to work along those lines on which all things are ready to help us forward to our better future. Without such conformity, all human thought, however brilliant and logical, is utterly sterile. "Let men learn," says Bacon, "the difference that exists between the idols of the human mind and the ideas of the Divine Mind. The former are mere arbitrary abstractions, the latter are the true marks of the Creator on His creatures, as they are imprinted on and defined in matter by true and exquisite touches. Truth therefore, and utility, are here perfectly identical, and effects are of more value as pledges of truth than from the benefit they confer on men.†

* St. Matt. v. 48. † "Novum Organum," bk. i. aph. 124.

CHAPTER VI.

OF INDUCTIVE PROPOSITIONS AND INDUCTIVE INFERENCE.

§ 1. INDUCTIVE propositions are general propositions collected from particular facts, and extended beyond the range of actual experience. Such inductive propositions are to be distinguished from what in the last chapter I ventured to call inductive ideas. Both inductive ideas and inductive propositions are generalisations; both are obtained from facts. But, in the case of ideas, we generalise a number of individual experiences so as to express some common resemblance, and thereby obtain a homogeneous notion; as heat, knowledge, justice. Here the idea stands alone; nothing is affirmed respecting it, no proposition is framed, no doctrine is asserted, no belief is challenged. Whilst on the other hand, in every proposition, two different ideas, or terms, are in some manner brought into comparison, and something is either affirmed or denied of something. For example, I may express the idea of death by a single noun without a verb of any kind, and therefore without framing any proposition. The word may have a meaning to the mind of the person who hears me

utter it. But were I to ask him whether he assents to it or denies it, he could give me no answer; and that, for the simple reason, that there is as yet nothing to believe or deny. If I now introduce a second idea, the idea of poison, and go on to say death is caused by poison, there is a proposition. And now we have all the three elements which, according to the doctrine of Mr. Bain, make up an induction—there is an appeal to facts, a process of generalisation, and the framing of a proposition.

§ 2. But propositions, to be truly inductive, must be something more than the summing up of what we have specifically observed in the individual cases that we have examined. If, for example, on studying the history of the planting of Christianity it occurs to me that all the apostles were Jews, I can frame a general proposition to that effect—a proposition in which the three elements of an induction already spoken of shall all be present; there shall be the evidence of facts, the process of generalisation, and the verbal proposition—but there will, in the scientific sense, be no induction; unless indeed it is the induction by simple enumeration which, as we have already seen, Bacon regards as puerile and unfruitful.

§ 3. The fact is, one thing more is needful to make up a complete conception of induction as it is now understood by men of science, namely, that it involves a process of real inference. If facts can be called premises, then we may say with Mr. Mill that “the conclusion in an induction embraces

more than is contained in the premises. The principle or law collected from particular instances, the general proposition in which we embody the result of our experience, covers a much larger extent of ground than the individual experiments, (or facts), which are said to form its basis. A principle, ascertained by experience, is more than a mere summing up of what we have specifically observed in the individual cases we have examined; it is a generalisation grounded on those cases, and expressive of our belief that what we have there found true is true of an indefinite number of cases which we have not examined and are never likely to examine."* "To constitute an induction," says Mr. Bain, "there must be the extension of the concurrence of observed events to the unobserved ones—to the *future* which has not yet come within observation, to the *past* before observation began, to the *remote* where there has been no access to observe. This is the leap, the hazard of induction which is necessary to complete the process. Without this leap our facts are barren; they teach us what has been after the event, whereas we want knowledge that shall instruct us before the event, that shall impart what we have no means of observing. A complete induction, then, is a generalisation that shall express what is conjoined everywhere and at all times, superseding for ever the labour of fresh observation."†

* Mill's "Logic," bk. ii. chap. i. sect. 8.

† Bain's "Logic," vol. ii. p. 2.

§ 4. Suppose, for the purpose of illustration, we take those precepts of the Sermon on the Mount which prescribe our behaviour towards our fellow-men, and treat them inductively. These precepts we find to be given in relation to specific acts, such as turning the other cheek, giving the cloak also, lending, hoping for nothing again, and so forth; these are our facts, and they furnish the first element of an induction. We then trace in these precepts an idea common to them all, the idea of self-denial. This is a generalisation, and it constitutes the second element of induction. Then the third element is obtained when this idea is put into the form of a general proposition, such as this for example, that Christ would have His disciples in all these cases to accept duties rather than insist on rights. And, finally, this law or principle is extended beyond the specific precepts of the Sermon on the Mount; so that whilst the proposition is founded upon the examples here given, and rests upon them for its evidence and justification, it is taken to have a far wider sweep than that of the letter of the precepts, and even to stand good for the whole conduct of the Christian life.

§ 5. Mr. Mill has shown that inferences are really inductive, whether they formally pass through the intermediate stage of a general proposition, or are drawn directly from particulars to a supposed parallel case. For example, we read in the book of the prophet Micah this statement: "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." The inductive inference

derived from this statement would be a general proposition to the effect that God accepts moral goodness rather than ritual service. Furnished with this general truth, we might now, by a process of deduction, reach the particular truth, that God loves mercy better than the ceremonial observance of the Sabbath, or than the avoidance of the contamination supposed to attach itself to intercourse with publicans and sinners. But in the two instances in which our Lord is said to have used the statement of Micah for the reproof of the Pharisees, He omits the formal enunciation of the general doctrine, and applies it directly to the particular cases in question.*

§ 6. Induction and deduction differ greatly from each other ; but they are alike in one thing, they are both processes of inference. By the inductive inference we are enabled to construct general propositions from the consideration of particular facts, and to attribute to them a universality which transcends actual experience ; the deductive inference reverses the process, and enables us to anticipate particular facts by the knowledge of general truths. Induction accordingly is the process of discovery ; deduction is the process of proof. In induction we learn new truths ; in deduction we verify the truths so learned by new experiences in actual life. In human affairs both these processes are constantly in use. For example, till we know a man, we have to form our judgment of his skill, or his

* See Appendix.

goodness, by his actions ; we generalise particular facts, and then form a general estimate to which we give the name of "character." This is, to all intents and purposes, the process of induction. But when we know the man, whether the knowledge is obtained by our own observation or by the testimony of other persons, we can anticipate his actions : this is the process of deduction. We are thus continually ascending from particulars to generals, and descending from generals to particulars in the entire conduct of life. An example of this double process is furnished by St. Paul. He takes the particular case given in the command of the law of Moses that the ox should be allowed to eat the corn which it is employed in treading out. He rises from the particular case to the general principle involved in it, that every labourer should be allowed to profit by his work. And having obtained the principle, he applies it to the particular case of the support of the Christian ministry.

§ 7. Although the Baconian method has, hitherto, been chiefly employed in the prosecution of physical research, it is certain that Bacon himself never intended to limit its application to such inquiries. Indeed, he uses very positive language to the contrary. "It may be doubted, rather than objected, by some, whether we look to the perfection, by means of our method, of natural philosophy alone, or of the other sciences also, of logic, of ethics, of politics. But we certainly mean what

has been said to be understood as to them all ; and as the ordinary logic, which proceeds by syllogism, does not relate to physical only, but to every other science, so ours, which proceeds by induction, comprises them all. For we as much collect a history and form tables concerning anger, fear, shame, and the like, and also concerning examples from civil life, and as much concerning the intellectual operations of memory, combination and partition, judgment and the others, as concerning heat and cold, or light, or vegetation, or such things.”*

§ 8. The application of induction to human conduct becomes possible, the moment we see that our estimate of character, or our moral judgment of persons, is in reality a process of generalisation from observed facts. When we speak of a man as good, or wise, or skilful ; or call him a thief, or a liar ; or regard him as qualified for any office or work, we are supposed to have already observed some acts or performances of his, *sufficiently characteristic* to justify us in forming the judgment that those acts can be repeated by him in the future ; that what he has done once he will be able, in similar circumstances, to do again, showing the same goodness, or bravery, or pity, or benevolence, or skill, as the case may be. The character is far more than the mere sum of the acts done. The man is more than his deeds, whether good or bad ; but the deeds are characteristic of the man, and reveal more or less ade-

* “ Novum Organum,” bk i. aph. 127.

quately what he is and what may be expected from him.

§ 9. And thus we may in moral questions argue from the past to the future, from the particular to the general, precisely in the same manner as we do in physical questions. Just as we conclude that the same light, which blackened nitrate of silver yesterday, will be able to blacken nitrate of silver to-day; so we conclude that the surgeon, who successfully performed an operation last week, will be able to operate with equal success next week under similar conditions, and that the friend who loves me to-day will love me to-morrow. Such judgments are really inductive conclusions, or results of that principle which turns the simple facts of experience into the ground of a general expectation or confidence respecting the future.* They are subject, as all inductions are, to subsequent verification; and they are not less really inductive judgments because we have only a qualitative and not a quantitative, or mathematical scale of determination, or because real tendencies and power may even be interfered with by human waywardness and sin. The mental process may be truly performed, although the expected result should never take place.

§ 10. Although experience teaches the past only and not the future, yet by the process of induction we are enabled to convert the simple facts of

* "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right."—*Prov. xx. 11.*

experience into a general expectation, or confidence respecting the future, amounting to actual prevision. It enables us to foretell what will take place should such and such agents come together, provided only that the present constitution of the world remains unchanged, or, in other words, provided the ground of induction does not give way. There may be contingency as to whether the agents shall ever approach one another, but there is no uncertainty as to what will take place, should the combination ever occur. In this inductive prevision, this "leap into the future," as it has been called, we pass beyond actual experience by the help of experience itself. Such inductive prophecy takes the past as the type and warrant of the future; and it is to be regarded as the announcement of great principles available for human needs rather than the foretelling of special events. The fulfilment of such prophecy may take place again and again; and for this reason, namely, that a principle or law is never exhausted, however frequently it may find exemplification in fresh facts. Perhaps the past never exactly repeats itself; but principles abide, and are ever presenting themselves under new conditions of time, or place, or person, or under all these at once. It is in this way we learn the future from the past, by discovering the eternal principle, which the transient events of the past have revealed to us. When this spirit is carried into the religious life, it finds expression in the inspired words of the Psalmist :

"They that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee."* Actual experience forms the ground of future trust.

§ 11. It is not the business of induction to predict the actual events of the future, but to ascertain the nature and tendency of the objects and agents which exist around us, and to discover the law of their action. In like manner, it is not the business of law to determine what events shall actually take place in the future, but to provide by way of anticipation for every combination and contingency that may arise.† The prophecy of

* Psa. ix. 10.

† It is in this sense, I suppose, we are to understand the words of Sir J. Herschel: "The very idea of a law includes that of contingency. *Si quis mala carmina condidisset, fuste ferito*; if such a case arise, such a course shall be followed,—if the match be applied to the gunpowder, it will explode. Every law is a provision for cases which *may* occur, and has relation to an infinite number of cases that never have occurred, and never will. Now, it is this provision, *a priori*, for contingencies, this contemplation of possible occurrences, and predisposal of what shall happen, that impresses us with the notion of a *law* and a *cause*. Among all the possible combinations of the fifty or sixty elements which chemistry shows to exist on earth, it is likely, nay, almost certain, that *some* have never been formed; that some elements, in some proportions, and under some circumstances, have never yet been placed in relation with one another. Yet no chemist can doubt that it is *already fixed* what they will do when the case does occur. They will obey certain laws of which we know nothing at present, but which must *be* already fixed, or they could not be laws. It is not by habit, or by trial and failure, that they learn what to do. When the contingency occurs there will be no hesitation, no consultation; their course will at once be decided, and will always be the same, if it occur ever so often in succession, or in ever so many places at one and the same instant. This is the perfection of a law, that it includes all possible contingencies, and ensures implicit obedience; and of this kind are the laws of nature."—Herschel's "Discourse on Natural Philosophy," p. 86.

Jonah, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed," contained a moral truth, although the repentance of the people was a bar to its actual fulfilment.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GROUND OF INDUCTION.

§ 1. WE have now come face to face with the one great difficulty which stands in the way of the design of this essay. Christianity belongs to the order of human life and history, and it has been seriously doubted whether the events of human life and the facts of history, so far as they have been determined by the free action of the human will, are capable of scientific treatment at all. The success of physical research depends upon the constancy of the laws of nature, and the constancy of the laws of nature is revealed by the perfect uniformity of the behaviour of natural forces, under every possible trial to which they can be subjected. Although the most obvious characteristic of the world in which we live is unceasing change, so that every creature is in a constant state of growth or decay, and no two events ever take place which are in every particular exactly alike; yet we believe that amidst this ever-shifting scene there is neither chance nor caprice, but that every atom and every agent has its own law of action, and will never deviate a hair's-breadth from the will of the Divine

Creator. The whole creation thus becomes a true witness for God. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy-work." "He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: and his word runneth very swiftly." "Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours, stormy wind fulfilling his word." It is this uniformity of the course of nature, this regulation of the behaviour of natural agents by fixed laws, that constitutes the ground of induction, and is our warrant for trusting in the generalisations and inferences which we derive from past experience.*

§ 2. But the moment we pass on to the consideration of human life, we become aware of the existence of laws of another kind; laws equally divine and unchangeable, but not equally certain in effective result; laws which, when put into words, may be expressed in the imperative, without coming

* The acknowledged uniformity of the laws of nature "may be called," says Mr. Hallam, "the suppressed premise of every Baconian enthymem, every inference from observation of phenomena which extends the particular case. When it is once ascertained that water is composed of one proportion of oxygen to one of hydrogen, we never doubt but that such are its invariable constituents. We may repeat the experiment to secure ourselves against the risk of error in the operation, or of some unperceived condition that may have affected the result; but when a sufficient number of trials has secured us against this, an invariable law of nature is inferred from the particular instance; nobody conceives that one pint of pure water *can* be of a different composition from another. All men, even the most rude, reason upon this primary maxim; but they reason inconclusively, from misapprehending the true relations of cause and effect in the phenomena to which they direct their attention. It is by the sagacity and ingenuity with which Bacon has excluded the various sources of error, and disengaged the true cause, that his method is distinguished from that which the vulgar practise."—Hallam's "Literary History of Europe," vol. ii. p. 419.

to be expressed in the indicative mood. Such laws take the form of precepts or commands prescribing duties to be done or dispositions to be cherished, such as love to God and man, faith in Christ, loyalty to truth, and such like. These are laws in the highest sense of the word. They are moral laws, and imply an understanding and a will, a power to obey or to disobey, in the agent to whom they are prescribed. If God's perfect law of human nature were written on the human will as the law of gravitation is written on every particle of matter, then it would be possible to determine beforehand what our behaviour would be in all the possible combinations and relations into which we could at any time be brought with the millions of our fellow-men; and the uniformity of that behaviour would be as uniform as the law itself. But man is, within certain limits, a free agent. He is able to sin and do what God forbids him to do, and so, to violate the special law of his highest nature. The divine law cannot always be read in his character and conduct. The actual facts of his life too often reveal the will of man in rebellion against God. Human history is, in consequence, a mixed revelation of divine and human agency, often in a state of antagonism. So far from human life expressing the true law of humanity, it too often expresses the penalty of broken law; or, if the word law is now taken in its secondary sense of uniform sequence, it expresses the prevalence of "the law of sin and death;" just as living beings become subject

to chemical decomposition when the vital energy is extinct—the lower law invariably coming into operation as soon as the higher law is suspended.

§ 3. In the study of human nature, therefore, there seems to be no ground of induction. So strongly has this been felt by Mr. Froude that he gives up altogether the hope of success in its prosecution. "When natural causes," he says, "are liable to be set aside and neutralised by what is called volition, the word science is out of place. If it is free to a man to choose what he will do or not do there is no adequate science of him. If there is no science of him, there is no free choice, and the praise or blame with which we regard one another is impertinent and out of place. It is in this marvellous power of men to do wrong . . . that the impossibility stands of forming scientific calculations of what men will do before the fact, or scientific explanations of what they have done after the fact." *

§ 4. The original facts of Christianity as exhibited in our Lord's life have, however, this singularly exceptional character, as compared with the broken life of other men; they are the product of eternal moral and spiritual laws, voluntarily accepted and constantly obeyed under real historical conditions, with a uniformity as undeviating as that which is exhibited by the forces of the material world. In Him the *quid est* and the *quid oportet* (which are commonly regarded as the respective

* Froude's "Short Studies," vol. i. pp. 22, 24.

objects of the physical and the moral sciences) are found to coincide. Liberty is necessity, and necessity is liberty. His character was, in its spiritual development, the result of a glad obedience to the will of His Father. No single action of His life, no word nor thought was dictated by caprice or self-will. In Him the divine law of humanity was perfectly exemplified. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Hence His qualification to assume that office to which He was anointed, as the Christ of God and the Redeemer of men. "Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."* The prophecy which says, "Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come . . . I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart," † found its fulfilment in His own words: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." ‡

§ 5. Notwithstanding the profound mystery which belongs to our Lord's personality, and notwithstanding the difficulty we may find in the interpretation of His words and acts, there are at least two things of which we feel quite certain,

* Heb. vii. 26.

† Psa. xl. 6-8.

‡ John iv. 34; v. 30.

on grounds to be hereafter stated. First, we feel certain that eternal moral law lies at the very heart of His holy life, and of the great salvation which He accomplished by His atoning death. And, secondly, we feel certain that His obedience to law was not only constant and undeviating, but voluntary and free. He is therefore the Pattern Man, fully realising the Divine Ideal of humanity, an unchangeable Saviour, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He is the beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased; and to Him belongs, in its fullest sense, the saying of St. John: "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." The perfection of His character is the manifestation of the eternal law in the human world; and its invariability forms the ground of inductive inference in our dealing with the historical facts of His earthly life.

§ 6. Hence it is that the gospel, which is in reality Christ Himself and what He has done and suffered in relation to us, takes the character of a Divine Covenant or Method of Grace, as distinguished from a mere exhibition of capricious sovereignty or arbitrary administration. It is no doubt a most glorious display of the Divine Will, but of the Divine Will committed to a definite constitution of things and to definite modes of spiritual action, which we, on our part, have only to investigate and conform to, in order to find all the resources of divine grace ready for our use. It is this settled order of administration in the kingdom

of God, that furnishes the ground of inductive inference and expectation, because it leads us to look upon every fact of the gospel not as a detached event, but as part of a great design and the expression of some unchanging principle of divine truth. But where there is no definite constitution, extending to the most minute particulars as well as to the greatest things, facts are altogether without scientific value, and therefore cannot be trusted to reveal to us the mind of God as "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."*

§ 7. Such is the idea of the Covenant of Grace; and of this idea the external world, with its settled order, its recurrent types, and its invariable laws, is the visible symbol and the material guarantee. The laws of nature are the established and inflexible conditions under which all God's creatures are ready to serve us. We may trust them, but cannot change them by a hair's-breadth. In proportion as we learn their true nature, we obtain power over them. To be ignorant of them, or consciously to oppose them, is to be out of the divine order, and to incur the penalty of ignorance or wilful disobedience. The idea of a divine covenant in the outward world frequently occurs in the writings of the prophets, although it is only in recent times that it has become familiar to ordinary men. The prophet Jeremiah recurs to it again and again; as, for example, when he

* James i. 17.

speaks of God's "covenant of the day and covenant of the night," and of "the appointed ordinances of heaven and earth," and of "the ordinances of the moon and stars"*—or, as we now say, the laws of nature—as the pledge of that higher covenant, which determines the regulation and growth of the free spiritual life of moral agents under the kingdom of Christ as the Son of David.

§ 8. Now this higher covenant has been given us in the redemption which Christ accomplished when He was here on earth, and of which He speaks in His great intercessory prayer: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Christianity, when so viewed, is a perfect work, admitting neither addition nor change—an "eternal salvation," "an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." It is no longer what it once was, a mere purpose of the Divine Mind or the prophetic anticipation of inspired men. It has taken its place among the immutable facts of human history. It involves a real and objective solution in human life of all the problems of our deliverance from sin and death. And as a great system of spiritual grace, it is available under the ministration of the Holy Spirit for the regeneration of mankind; and having determinate laws and doctrinal principles, it is open to the investigation of prepared minds, and is free to the acceptance

* Jer. xxxi. 35; xxxiii. 20, 25.

and use of the whole human race as the unspeakable gift of God's grace.

§ 9. There are some persons of great intellectual ability, who persistently adhere to the *a priori* method of dealing with the highest questions of human interest, and who assume that it is a debasement of spiritual thought to admit the mediation of sensible facts as a help to its evolution. It has even been said, that "eternal truth is unconditioned and has no temporal history;" that "there is no chronological element in revelation;" and that "spiritual things are exempt from phenomenal laws, and have a subjective validity, independent of the testimony of the senses and the deductions made therefrom by the intellect;" so that these transcendental objects are entirely beyond the empirical treatment of induction. To believers, the fact of our Lord's incarnation is the answer to this objection. "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."* The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ, although that face may at first sight, like all greatest things, fail to give us that full impression of the infinite beauty which will grow upon us as we continue to gaze upon it.

* John i. 14. "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."
—1 John iv. 2, 8.

Apart from this revelation, there may be "secret things which belong unto the Lord our God," and which are quite inaccessible to human inquiry. In the external world, invisible light is ever radiating from the sun into all parts of starless space. It is that portion of it alone which strikes upon the atmosphere, or is reflected from other material objects, that is actually available for the purposes of vision and of scientific examination. Our need, in this world is not the inheritance of all existing truth, but the knowledge of that specific truth which is able to make us wise unto salvation, and which is given in our Lord's life: "the truth as it is in Jesus." Men, ignorant of this provision of the Divine bounty, may in sentimental self-pity cry for "more light;" as if their condition was that of men having good eyes in a dark world, whereas it is really that of men with diseased eyes living in a world of light. "The true light now shineth," but we fail to perceive it, and then go about deploring the darkness and poverty of our present lot, as if our heavenly Father had not cared for the spiritual wants of His children. We complain of the penury of our resources, when we ought rather to blame ourselves for the inveteracy of our prejudices and the indocility of our minds.

§ 10. God has indeed given us in Christ the very light we need; but He has so given it—given it under such conditions of economy and reserve—as to make the very reception of it an experimental process of moral discipline and salvation. The seeming

narrowness and poverty of His gift, and the difficulty we find in appropriating it to the actual uses of life, are the results of our own ignorance and extravagance of desire. We wish for answers to all kinds of mysterious and irrelevant questions, instead of trying to interpret the facts which lie before our eyes. But the Divine mercy is inexorably better to us than to indulge us in our own wishes. That we are permitted "to know but in part" is for our advantage, and so far justifies the seemingly paradoxical saying that "a part is better than the whole;" and a patient resignation to the unknowable, releases the energies of the mind from useless labour, and leaves them free to be directed to their proper work. Intellectual aspiration is not thereby suppressed, but guided. In optical instruments portions of the tubes are blackened expressly to obliterate light, so that the vision of specific objects may not be distracted by superfluous rays. And so quiet and persistent is the Divine forbearance, that God will wait till we are ready to yield to His method of grace, though thousands of years of self-willed indocility should have to pass away before we see the blessedness of submission. Many a door remains closed to us, only because our true way leads onward. If we turn to the right hand or to the left and find no opening, we may petulantly complain of the narrowness of the gospel, even though, in the time of our need, the path leads on to the infinite and eternal. No self-willed endeavour of ours will enable us to break through the

limitations of the divine covenant. "I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them; then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now."

§ 11. It will be evident, from the foregoing remarks, that there is a very wide difference between the method of collecting the principles of Christianity directly from the facts of the gospel, and that metaphysical treatment of Christianity which has sometimes been adopted by philosophical theologians.* The difference is seen, not only in the method itself, but also in the spirit by which it is pervaded and the results obtained. Metaphysics are entirely independent of historical facts, and have only to do with abstract principles or ideal truths, which would be the same if the world had never existed at all, or if the history and character of its inhabitants had been altogether different from what they are. Metaphysical inquiry depends upon the play of the reasoning faculty, exercising itself upon assumed principles, according to the laws of a formal logic; and is only concerned that the process be correctly gone through, even though

* "A Christianity after the fashion of modern philosophers and pantheists, without a personal God, without immortality, without human individuality, without historical faith, is no Christianity to me, though it may be a very intellectual and a very ingenious philosophy. I have often said that I do not know what to do with a metaphysical God, and that I will have none but the God of the Bible, who is heart to heart with us."—Niebuhr's "Life and Letters," vol. ii. p. 125.

the conclusion reached should in no way correspond with the reality of things. In inductive knowledge, on the contrary, the first object is to obtain true premises from the real world, and so to furnish the mind with principles proper for deductive reasoning. It seeks for these principles by interpreting and explaining the facts to which the particular branch of knowledge refers. In a word, metaphysics are determined by the logic of consistency, whilst positive science is ruled by the logic of facts.*

§ 12. The metaphysical process is, indeed, of great service in the economy of our spiritual training, although it only indirectly contributes to the determination of concrete truth. All thought, in every department of knowledge, has in it a metaphysical or ideal element, which refuses to be suppressed. And although this ideal element, even where it most nearly touches actual life, is never completely realised, yet it always determines the degree in which outward facts approach a transcendental standard of truth. Mathematics, themselves, are metaphysics reduced to scale, and so within their special limits become capable of being applied to concrete matter. Quantitative metaphysics, (as mathematics may be called,) thus become for our

* "A system of philosophy is bound by two main requisitions: it ought to be true, and it ought to be reasoned. . . . Of these obligations, the latter is more stringent; it is more proper that philosophy should be reasoned, than that it should be true. . . . A system which is reasoned without being true, is always of higher value than a system which is true without being reasoned."—Ferrier's "Institutes of Metaphysics," pp. 1, 2.

mental processes, within certain limits, what instruments of exact measurement are for material manipulation. But, then, in order to be of any practical value, the mental instrument must have commensurate matter to deal with, otherwise the abstract can in no way determine material things. A metaphysical treatment of human conduct attempts to deal with history as an exact science; but the attempt, except perhaps in the curious application of the law of probability to human actions, has not yet succeeded. No mathematical formulas yet known to us can be brought to bear upon the problems of human nature, or upon the gospel facts. There may be "Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy," (to use the title of Newton's great work), but the mathematical principles of moral philosophy, if such there be, are entirely unknown to the mind of man.

§ 13. Moreover, it is in the field of metaphysics that the human mind first becomes conscious of its wonderful powers of combination and deduction. The process is profoundly flattering to the just pride of human reason, on account of the rapidity and consistency of its results, the brilliancy of its imaginative creations, and its independence of material facts. The mind finds, in its free and unfettered exercise and range of excursion into the unseen, a joy like "the joy of the wild ass" ranging among the boundless spaces of the desert, and never yet made to bear the yoke of humble labour. It is in this way it learns to feel its strength and

agility ; and it must even be added that it is thus, in the long run, it learns to discover the fruitlessness of its marvellous activity when so employed. For nothing in the history of the human mind is more certain than the fact that our earliest speculations show a singular contempt for the common things which lie at hand, ready for our mental use, whilst they spontaneously attack the most insoluble questions, upon subjects the most persistently inaccessible to all decisive, practical investigation. "It is a mistake to suppose," says Lord Macaulay,* "that subtile speculations touching the Divine attributes, the origin of evil, the necessity of human actions, the foundation of moral obligation, imply a high degree of intellectual culture. Such speculations, on the contrary, are in a peculiar manner the delight of intelligent children and half-civilised men."

§ 14. It is not needful for the purposes of this essay, that I should enter further into the details of the inductive method. Those who wish to pursue the subject may consult the well-known works of Whewell, Herschel, Mill, and Bain.

§ 15. In conclusion, it will appear that what is called the ground of induction (whether in physical or Christian inquiry) is held as such either by an intuitive instinct or by the exercise of faith in the immutability of the Divine order. Experience has to do with the past, and it can give us no demonstrative assurance that the future will resemble it.

* *Edinburgh Review*, No. cxlv. p. 280.

I may be quite sure that the honey which I found sweet yesterday will be sweet to-morrow, and that the friend I have trusted during all my past life will be equally worthy of my trust hereafter; but the certainty, in all such cases, involves a venture of faith. And it is by a venture of faith that we look forward to the realisation of those Christian principles and hopes which the facts of the gospel have actually exemplified and taught us to expect. To the consideration of the nature of this faith and the conditions of its exercise I shall now proceed.

BOOK II.

OF FAITH IN CHRIST.

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.—
JOHN vi. 28, 29.

CHAPTER I.

THE FUNDAMENTAL NATURE OF FAITH IN CHRIST.

§ 1. So far as we have already gone, Christianity must be allowed to take its place among the facts of the world, and to have a right to be treated as a reality in the history of the past. But we have now to remember, that Christianity claims to be far more than a mere historical fact. It claims to be a Divine gospel, sent from heaven for the salvation of the world, a kingdom of God on earth, a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, and itself a prophecy of the final redemption of the world from sin and death. With these claims it appeals to the faith of mankind, and demands of them not only a belief in its events as historical facts, but a belief in its adaptation, when received into the heart, to bring about the results it has undertaken to secure. Accordingly, faith in Jesus of Nazareth, as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, is the fundamental principle upon which the Catholic Church has, by a true instinct, firmly put down its foot, and on which (in profession at least) it has ever stood.

§ 2. The apostles of Christ, at the very beginning

of their enterprise, were challenged, in the most public manner, in the presence of the rulers of their people, openly to declare "by what power or by what name" they were acting, and so in effect to make known, before all coming generations of mankind, the fundamental principle of the revolution which they inaugurated. "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." * And he repeats the assertion in his first epistle: "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient." †

§ 3. Such is the fundamental principle on which Christianity openly put itself before the world.

* Acts iv. 11, 12.

† 1 Pet. ii. 6-8.

Nothing could be more definite and explicit. The person put forward as the object of saving faith, was no theological abstraction, but a Person who only a few weeks before had been living among them, so that Peter could say, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death." * Any attempt to construct the fabric of Christian thought or Christian life must depend upon fidelity to this faith as its formative law, or constituent idea. It may or may not be possible to form an inductive science of Christianity; but if it should ever be formed at all, its defining principle must be faith in Jesus Christ, as the one name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved; Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. †

* Acts ii. 22-24.

† In a review of "Ecce Homo," which appeared some years ago in a Roman Catholic magazine, and is attributed to Dr. Newman, it is said that the author of that work invited men "to betake themselves to the contemplation of our Lord's character, as it is recorded by the Evangelists, as carrying with it its own evidence, dispensing with extrinsic proof, and claiming authoritatively by itself the faith and devotion of all to whom it is presented." The review then goes on to say, "Such an argument is, of course, as old as Christianity. . . . Its special force lies in its directness; it comes to the point at once, and concentrates in itself evidence, doctrine, and devotion. In theological lan-

§ 4. The method of Christian inquiry which I am here endeavouring to expound, contemplates three things : (1) The process by which general truths are collected from the original facts of the gospel ; (2) the ethical conditions necessary to be observed in conducting the process ; and (3) the experimental application of the truths, so obtained, to the formation of character and to the conduct of life. In each of these views of Christian inquiry, faith in Christ occupies a fundamental place. In the first, faith in Christ is the ground of induction. In the second, faith in Christ is the first duty of discipleship. And in the third, faith in Christ is the first condition of vital union with Him, as the source of all spiritual life and fruitfulness. Faith in Christ is, therefore, the fundamental postulate in each of the three views of Christian inquiry above indicated. Christ is the centre of the Christian circle ; this, all will admit—all at least who accept the method which teaches

guage, it is the *motivum credibilitatis*, the *objectum materiale*, and the *formale*, all in one ; it unites human reason and supernatural faith in one complex act, and it comes home to all men, educated and ignorant, young and old. And it is the point to which, after all and in fact, all religious minds tend, and in which they ultimately rest, even if they do not start from it. Without an intimate apprehension of the personal character of our Saviour, what professes to be faith is little more than an act of ratiocination. If faith is to live, it must love ; it must lovingly live in the Author of faith as a true and living being, *in Deo vivo et vero*, according to the saying of the Samaritans to their townswoman : ‘ We now believe, not for thy saying ; for we ourselves have heard him.’ Many doctrines may be held implicitly, but to see Him as if intuitively is the very promise and gift of Him who is the object of the intuition. We are constrained to believe when it is He that speaks to us about Himself.”—“The Month,” June, 1866, p. 553.

us to look for the meaning of a thing in the thing itself—even though they should be unwilling to believe Him to be the centre of the whole of God's universe.

§ 5. The knowledge of Christ which is obtained by simple experience, and that which is obtained by formal inquiry, are mutually helpful. And in this, as well as in all other parts of human life, experience goes before science, a knowledge of facts precedes the formation of theories. We enjoy the warmth and light of the sun, long before we think of analysing its rays. There is speech before there is grammar; reasoning before there is logic; persuasion before there is rhetoric. Systematic inquiry into the Christian facts by the method of induction, if it should ever be carried into effect, must be among the latest efforts of the human mind. But whether we deal with the gospel in the character of simple disciples, living upon it as our daily bread, or in that of scientific inquirers, searching into its doctrinal significance, we must begin with the principle of faith in Christ. Both Christian experience and Christian science are developments of the same principle in different regions of the Christian life. A true experience and a true science must eventually correspond with each other. They may differ in the history of their growth, but they will agree in their first truth and in their final expression.

§ 6. It is now important to observe that the Objective truth of the principle itself is, by no

means dependent upon the Subjective entertainment we give it. That Jesus Christ is the anointed Saviour of the world, is an eternal, changeless truth, whether we believe it or not. Our unbelief may deprive us of the benefit of salvation, but it can never "make the faithfulness of God without effect." * Truth does not begin to be truth when we accept it, nor does it cease to be truth when we reject it. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." † This is the true resting-place of the soul. "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." ‡

* Rom. iii. 3.

† 2 Tim. ii. 13.

‡ Heb. vi. 17, 18.

CHAPTER II.

HOW THE PRINCIPLE WAS OBTAINED.

§ 1. IF the truth, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Saviour of the world, is to obtain a definite intellectual value as the ground of a systematic knowledge of Christianity, we can scarcely avoid such questions as the following:—How did we come to know that it really is a truth? In what way did we ascertain that it occupies a place of such unique and fundamental importance among the moral forces of the world? How can we be quite sure that it is to be accepted as the only scientific basis of Christian knowledge? These questions must first be fairly met, before we can obtain an adequate ground or universal Christian premise, as a warrant for all subsequent inductive inference from the facts of the Redeemer's life and work.

§ 2. Every science, when viewed under its logical aspect, has its great fundamental principles, or points of departure. These principles take, for the sciences to which they respectively belong, the character of First Truths; and when they are clearly made out, they are capable of being expressed in the words of some simple formula.

There are three different ways in which such principles are *originally* obtained: first, by spontaneous Intuition; secondly, by the slow process of Induction; and thirdly, by Supernatural Revelation. No other way seems possible. But by whatever method they are obtained, such principles demand a loyal acceptance at our hands; they may be inserted in text books and used in education, and they are to be relied upon and verified by a courageous application in deductive reasoning and in practical life. All working principles partake of this positive character. As knowledge increases, they may have to be modified in their expression; or they may be absorbed into higher truths; or they may even be found to break down under the weight of new experience. In all the physical sciences, the fundamental principle upon which successful inquiry depends, is faith in the settled constitution and changeless order of the material world. In Christianity, our first principle is faith in the immutability of Christ as the Saviour of the world. What I now propose is, to endeavour to determine in what way this principle is obtained, and on what authority its fundamental character is guaranteed to us.

SECTION 1.—WAS IT BY NATURAL INTUITION?

§ 3. That some truths are obtained by what may be called intuitive experience, is universally admitted. We need no reasoning to learn that fire is hot to our feeling, that honey is sweet to our

taste, or that the rose is fragrant to our smell. In all such cases, the truth is seen at once by an immediate and direct perception, so that there is no pause, no hesitation, no doubt, no deliberative judgment, but a simple insight on the bare contact with the object. All that is needful in such experience, is that the object shall be fairly presented to the mind through the sense, and then the assent is sure to follow as a matter of course. Such intuitive perceptions are said to be universal, because all men, everywhere and in all ages, are ready to accept them, just as the eye receives light and sees, and the lungs receive air and breathe, by a law of nature which acts spontaneously. Among such truths are, I think, the reality of our own sensations and thoughts, our personal identity, the existence of other persons and of the material world, and perhaps the fact of universal causation. I have called such intuition an experience, because all perception is the result of the combined action of subject and object. It differs from tentative experience simply in the promptitude and certainty of its action.*

§ 4. Now, on looking at the facts of the case before us, it must be at once apparent that it is by

* "Truths are known to us in two ways: some are known directly, and of themselves; some through the medium of other truths. The former are the subject of intuition or consciousness; the latter, of inference. The truths known by intuition are the original premises from which all others are inferred. Our assent to the conclusion being grounded on the truth of the premises, we never could arrive at any knowledge by reasoning, unless something could be known antecedently to all reasoning."—Mill's "Logic." Introduction, § 4.

no such prompt and natural intuition that men receive Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world; or that they come to regard a personal adjustment of spiritual relationship to Him as the only true means by which the world's moral future can be secured, however benign it may be in regard to the character and destiny of individual men. The anticipation of the philosopher who ventured to predict that if virtue ever appeared incarnate upon earth, all men would be at once forced to do her homage, was not nearly so true to actual human nature as the inspired language of the prophet Isaiah, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not." * These were the words of the prophet; and how truly they have been fulfilled, the whole history of men's behaviour towards Christ is one continual proof. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." The very nation which had been especially educated † to receive Him, was condemned by the apostle in language which sums up the melancholy history of the blindness of their hearts: "The God of our fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered

* Isa. liii. 2, 3.

† "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."—Gal. iii. 24.

up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.”* And with this evidence of their spiritual dulness agrees the language of our Lord Himself: “If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.” †

§ 5. And if we look to later times, many of the greatest minds have failed to see the truth of Christ’s claims to be the Saviour of the world. The case of Marcus Aurelius, the Roman emperor, is mentioned by Mr. J. S. Mill as a striking example of this fact. “Placed at the summit of all the previous attainments of humanity, with an open unfettered intellect, and a character which led him, of himself, to embody in his moral writings the Christian ideal, he yet failed to see that Christianity was to be a good and not an evil to the world, with his duties to which he was so deeply penetrated. Existing society he knew to be in a deplorable state. But such as it was he saw, or thought he saw, that it was held together, and prevented from being worse, by belief and reverence of the received divinities. As a ruler of mankind, he deemed it his duty not to suffer society to fall to pieces; and he saw not how, if

* Acts iii. 13-15.

† John xv. 24.

its existing ties were removed, any other could be formed which could again knit it together. The new religion openly aimed at dissolving these ties: unless, therefore, it was his duty to adopt that religion, it seemed to be his duty to put it down. Inasmuch, then, as the theology of Christianity did not appear to him true, or of Divine origin; inasmuch as this strange history of a crucified God was not credible to him, and a system which purported to rest entirely upon a foundation, to him, so wholly unbelievable, could not be foreseen by him to be that renovating agency which, after all abatements, it has, in fact, proved to be; the gentlest and most amiable of philosophers and rulers, under a solemn sense of duty, authorised the persecution of Christianity. To my mind this is one of the most tragical facts in all history." * The same writer also says: "It can do truth no service to blink the fact, known to all who have the most ordinary acquaintance with literary history, that a large portion of the noblest and most valuable moral teaching has been the work, not only of men who did not know, but of men who knew and rejected the Christian faith." †

§ 6. These statements are sufficient to prove that there is no universal spontaneous instinct of the human heart, whereby men are prompted to commit themselves by a hearty faith to Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world. "No man can come to me," our Lord has said, "except the

* Mill on Liberty, pp. 49, 50.

† Ibid. p. 93.

Father which hath sent me draw him." Then, indeed, faith becomes an intuition of the mind which discovers that Jesus is "the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely," and which henceforth accepts Him as Lord and Master of the soul. But such personal feelings do not furnish the scientific ground of thought for which we are seeking, however satisfactory they may be to our own minds.

SECTION 2.—WAS IT BY INDUCTION ?

§ 7. The nature of the inductive process has already been considered at some length. At present it will be enough to observe that, if intuition signifies a spontaneous insight into truth, induction is insight into truth that comes as the result of investigation, conjecture, and earnest thought. There is experience in both cases : but in intuition the experience is direct and spontaneous, whilst in induction it is gradual, tentative, and self-corrective. According to the views already stated, induction may be regarded as the mental process by which we collect general principles from particular facts. And the question for us to consider is this : Is the fundamental principle of Christianity—the principle which is to form the ground of all subsequent inductions, and to guarantee them,—itself obtained by induction ? Or, in other words, is it possible, by the process of induction alone, as applied either to the facts of our Lord's life or to the past results of His

life upon human character and upon the moral condition of the race, to reach the conclusion that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world; and, as such, the sufficient ground of hope and confidence for the perfect emancipation of mankind from the power of sin and death? We have already seen that this conviction is not reached by a natural intuition of the mind. Our present inquiry is: Do we reach it by the slower process of a reasoned induction, independently of supernatural assistance?

§ 8. That our Lord constantly recognised that which we have learnt to call the inductive process of inference as a valid exercise of human reason in religion, there can be no doubt. No one can forget how often He points to what He *did*, as the evidence of what He *was*; how He sanctioned the great inductive maxim that "the tree is known by its fruit;" how He reproved men for not extending to the moral order the method of reasoning which they employed in reference to physical phenomena. "He said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"* But at that period the use of induction as a method of scientific inquiry into the facts of nature was, even amongst the most advanced

* Matt. xvi. 2, 3.

people, very feebly developed, and it was scarcely at all applied to the investigation of the facts of human life, of history, and of religious truth; so that we cannot be surprised if the Jews failed to apply it to the events which were taking place before their eyes in our Lord's life.

§ 9. But now that Christianity has been for nearly two thousand years in the world, and has during that period been operating upon human character, it might be supposed that a careful observation of the facts furnished by the past history of the Church, would be sufficient to yield up a principle, sufficiently general, to become the logical basis of a complete theory of salvation. We are, however, forced to admit that what has passed under the name of Christianity, does not satisfy the demands of inductive science. For as the matter actually stands, the salvation of the world is still only in an incipient state. We have indeed, in the history of the past, numerous facts to prove the wonderful power of Christianity to renew individual character and to regenerate social life. And such experience warrants the most hopeful feelings respecting the further triumphs of Christianity. All this is most thankfully admitted. But the same history which records the benefits which have been secured to mankind by the gospel, contains also much that has been done in the name of Christianity, which leads thoughtful men to hesitate before they would be prepared, on the ground of past experience alone, to give to Chris-

tianity the prerogative of actually presiding over the moral future of the world. What are called the "ages of faith" may have had their special excellencies, but they had also their great vices, and they can hardly be contemplated as fulfilling our idea of a regenerated humanity ; and to repeat them would be to throw back the progress of the world's salvation.

§ 10. Indeed, the experience of the past has been so chequered, and the progress of Christianity so slow, that even earnest believers have need of a firmer ground than that furnished by the history of the Church to justify their faith in Christ as the all-sufficient Saviour of the world. "I do not wonder," says Archbishop Thompson, "that God is omnipotent, that He hates sin, that the soul shall live for ever, reunited to a glorified body. But I wonder, and with trembling, that after the Redeemer paid the price—and a price so past computing—so much of the fruit of redemption remains still to be gathered. I find it hard, believing in Calvary, to believe in Whitechapel and St. Giles's." * And others, engaged in the ministry of that very gospel to which we attribute such a saving power, have often been tempted to yield to a feeling of despair. They have needed no infidel arguments to dishearten them. Their own experience has been enough to make them hesitate and doubt. Had they not been supported

* "Life in the Light of God's Word," by the Archbishop of York, p. 117.

by an inward faith in the Divine promises, they would have been ready to give up all, as if the fundamental principle of salvation were sliding away from beneath them, when brought to a practical test. Many an earnest servant of Christ has had to meet with disappointment and to retire in despair. It is at such moments that they have learnt to understand the bitterness which led the prophet to turn away from his hearers with the angry words: "My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another."*

§ 11. It is even difficult to obtain an adequate statement of the problem itself, and to say what is really meant by the salvation of the world. To some persons it will seem strange that, at the present day, such a question should have to be opened afresh. But in reality there is perhaps no single point that more urgently requires to be brought forward for reconsideration. If we are called to take a part, consciously and intelligently, in introducing Christ's salvation into human life, we must have a true conception of the nature of that salvation. All human work, especially work which relates to our spiritual life, must be informed with true thought. If our ideas do not correspond with Christ's, we shall be at cross purposes with Him, and so we may hinder instead of helping the progress of His gospel.

* Zech. xi. 8, 9.

§ 12. The idea of salvation which we collect from the gospel, does not consist in the perpetuation of our personal being and identity in a future life—the mere immortality of the soul. Nor is it the heathen idea of our passing into Elysian Fields, a mere going to heaven when we die, or a change of external condition irrespective of personal holiness. The Jewish conception differed widely from this; it was for the most part secularist and national, and contemplated the reign of a temporal Messiah and the spread of His empire over all nations. But whatever elements of truth these several views may contain, they do not touch the heart of the matter. Man is a sinner, and has come short of the glory of God. The Christian idea of salvation begins with the recognition of this great spiritual fact. Sin is a transgression of law, and the law which we have transgressed is the ideal law of our human nature. This law, is holy, just, and good. Were God to give up this law, or to lower it to the condition of our weakness, He would thereby proclaim the failure of His eternal purpose respecting us. Accordingly the gospel of Christ, in magnifying the law, and in insisting upon the fact that our transgression of it is not to be palliated as a misfortune, but charged upon us as a sin and a disgrace, upholds the true ideal of human nature, and justifies God in the demand which he makes upon it. Moreover, the gospel provides for the forgiveness of sin by no less a sacrifice than the precious blood of Christ. It then promises that the righteousness of the law

shall be fulfilled in us, and the Divine ideal of our nature secured by the actual renewal of our whole being by the power of the Holy Spirit. And finally it reveals to us the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

§ 13. But the salvation of the individual, as a spiritual process, cannot go forward without at the same time advancing the social condition of mankind. Indeed, the salvation of persons and the salvation of society proceed by a constant action and reaction upon each other — persons saving society, and society saving persons. This is no vicious circle. To say, as Dr. Newman does,* that “in religion each must begin, go on, and end for himself ;” that the religious history of each individual is as solitary and complete as the history of the world ; and that “the world ever remains in its infancy, as regards the cultivation of moral truth ” — is an exaggeration of the principle of independency, and is contrary to fact. The Christian hope bids us look for the time when we shall “all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of

* “Newman’s Sermons,” vol. vii. p. 248.—It may here be added that although personal character must in every case grow up from its own germ, and the grace needed must ever come fresh and fresh from the Holy Spirit, yet it does not follow that the world must ever continue in its infancy, and remain no better than it was when the flood came, but rather grow worse and worse with the lapse of time, as Dr. Newman asserts. Evil may, indeed, become more evil, but then, to counter-balance this, good becomes more good, and a larger quantity of human personality becomes Christian. Every life may be a new life ; but its helps and conditions may vastly improve, and all the outward elements which act upon it may, as time goes on, be vastly better than those that went before. It is better to be the least in the kingdom of heaven than under any other dispensation of religion.—*See St. Matthew xi. 11.*

the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ;" and this corporate perfection is to be secured "by that which every joint supplieth." There can be no perfected salvation for any one of us by himself alone, either in this life or the life to come.

§ 14. And so, too, on the same principle of solidarity, the past helps the present, and the present tends to perfect the past. "He that soweth and he that reapeth are to rejoice together." The last comers may always say of those who have gone before them : God has "provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." *

§ 15. Moreover, the Christian idea of salvation reaches also to the relations in which we stand to the forces of nature, for salvation is not limited to the transformation of moral character and of social life. The most casual reading of the Gospels ought at once to show us the fact that the salvation Christ has wrought for us is a physical as well as a spiritual victory. It is the removal of the curse upon nature, as well as the regeneration of the soul. The works which He did were *essential and constituent parts of the salvation which He perfected, and not mere evidential adjuncts to it*. They are samples and pledges of a power permanently available in actual life. Nothing can be more emphatic than the declaration of our Lord : "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works

* Heb. xi. 40.

that I do shall he do also ; and gréater works than these shall he do ; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”* And then we have the wonderful prophecy, “ Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands : Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him.”† And further, we read, that “ the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”‡

§ 16. Such is the salvation which we believe God has provided for the world in Christ, and in the appropriation of this salvation, in actual experience, we are called upon to be “ labourers together with God.” It involves the necessity of vast changes, both in ourselves and in the world around us ; but change is not always improvement. Experiments may be made in the cause of progressive amelioration, which may break down and end in failure and disappointment. We require the guidance of a sure principle in our attempts to work forward to our better future. And the question is : Do the facts of history and the past experience of the Church lead us to the conclusion that Jesus Christ is not only able to do all this, but that He has already

* John xiv. 12, 13.

† Heb. ii. 7.

‡ Rom. viii. 19-21.

virtually done it on our behalf; and to believe it, not simply as a devout sentiment or as an empirical generalisation, but as a truth so demonstrable, that it shall take its place as the ground of induction in all our subsequent inquiries into the facts of the gospel?

§ 17. We who are Christ's disciples do believe that to the uttermost of the Christian idea of salvation He is able to save the world. But this belief does not amount to a scientific induction resting upon the experience of the past. And although many facts confirm this belief when the truth is once made known to us from other sources, we should, I think, have failed to discover it for ourselves. How indeed could we? The very idea of such a salvation departs so widely from the range of any past experience, and even from any definite hope of realisation in human life, and sweeps away, like the pathway of a comet, into such untravelled regions of religious, moral, social, and physical possibility, that the unaided effort of reason, under the severest control of the inductive method, would have been utterly at a loss to discover, from the facts known to us, the formula of its actual evolution. We believe that "we are complete in Christ;" but we believe this, not on the ground of any past experience (which can only carry us a little way towards such a conclusion), but for reasons higher than any past experience is able to supply.*

* "That our success in abstract and physical research may aid us in extending our views to what may be called the social sciences, it is of primary importance in our choice, *if choose we must*, between a logical

SECTION 3.—IT WAS BY SUPERNATURAL REVELATION.

§ 18. We are endeavouring to find out the manner in which we obtain possession of the truth that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, so as to supply the intellectual requirement of a foundation or first truth of Christian science. We have already seen that neither intuition nor induction is sufficient for the purpose of yielding a principle of so high a generality, and charged with such far-reaching issues, and in the acceptance of which any error or mistake would be fraught with disaster to mankind. But we have now to observe that intuition and induction do not exhaust the methods in which it is possible for us to come into possession of general truths. Such truths may be obtained by a third method, namely, that of Divine revelation. "Particulars alone," says Mr. J. S. Mill, "are capable of being subjected to observation, and all knowledge that is derived from observation begins therefore, of necessity, in particulars; but our knowledge may, in cases of a certain description, be conceived as coming to us from other sources than

and an empirical philosophy, that we should be well aware how far and with what restrictions and humiliating conditions the former [or logical method] is possible or practicable. The citadel of truth equally vindicates its altitude, whether we measure it by toil and upward struggle, or by throwing ourselves headlong from its battlements. It is then that we are taught caution and reserve when observation presents us its axioms in a form inextricably involved, and when experiment is fraught with hazard to our happiness and that of others. A logical philosophy in such sciences which shall start from necessary and universal formulæ can only be safe when human history shall be complete, and the book of events on the point of closing for ever."—*Sir John Herschel's Article in the Quarterly Review on Whewell*, vol. lxviii. p. 222.

observation. It may present itself as coming from revelation; and the knowledge thus supernaturally communicated may be conceived to comprise not only particular facts but general propositions, such as occur abundantly in the writings of Solomon and in the apostolic epistles." *

§ 19. That Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world is, in fact, a matter of supernatural revelation. The same grace which sent Christ into the world as God's unspeakable gift to us, went on to add the further mercy of enabling us, "by many infallible signs," to identify that gift in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. We were not left to find out for ourselves, by our natural sagacity or by the slow method of scientific inquiry, who He was and the use we were to make of Him, as we have been left to discover the nature and uses of so many of the most precious medicines and agencies of the material world, which are now for the first time, after so many wasted years, beginning to be applied to the service of mankind. From the commencement of the gospel God has given special witness to His Son, and it is this witness which gives to faith in Christ that prerogative of fundamental certainty previous to actual experience which alone, among all our knowledges, the science of Christianity possesses.

§ 20. There are two ways in which the Divine

* Mill's "Logic," bk. ii. chap. 8, § 11. It is only fair to say that this quotation is taken from the first edition of Mr. Mill's work, as the passage is somewhat modified in later editions.

witness to Christianity has been given to mankind—internal in consciousness, and external in the region of sense. Of both these methods of Divine revelation there are many individual examples, such as those of St. Peter and St. Paul. These men were singled out to receive the witness, not for themselves alone, but in the interest of us all. I will take the case of Peter, and exhibit the evidence in parallel columns.

INTERNAL REVELATION.

"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*—*Matt.* xvi. 15-19.

EXTERNAL REVELATION.

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." And in after days Peter refers to this scene, and asserts its real historical character. "We have not followed cunningly devised fables (*μύθοις*), when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount."—*2 Pet.* i. 16-18.

* The rebuke which was so soon afterwards given to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan," serves to show that good and evil are mixed

Let the truth of these narratives be accepted as a matter of historic fact, and we feel that we have the authority of God for trusting in Jesus Christ and following Him as the true Head and Saviour of the world. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*

§ 21. And still further, the Divine witness is to be traced in another direction. Redemption from physical evil is a constituent part of Christian salvation, and the germs of this are to be found in those works of healing and restoration which our Lord performed when He was here. Whether the power which He thus introduced and constantly exercised is capable of perpetuating itself in the world, and of becoming, under determinate and scientific conditions of development, permanently and increasingly available for the use of mankind, are questions which past experience does not enable us confidently to answer in the affirmative. It is, however, important to our present purpose to observe that the wonderful works which our Lord performed had in them an evidential power, even if they were not the initial acts of an abiding force. Miracles have their law of produc-

together in the same person, like the wheat and the tares in the parable. Principles can be taken up in their ideal simplicity and be placed before the mind as objects of unqualified complacency. There is only one person whom it is safe to follow with entire trust, and that is Jesus Christ.

* 1 John v. 9, 10.

tion, as all facts have. If they involve a violation of law, it is only in the sense that the coming in of a higher law supersedes or controls the action of a lower law. The laws of nature graduate; and the lower laws can only be conquered by the higher—mechanical by chemical, chemical by vital, vital by intellectual, intellectual by moral, and moral by spiritual. All natural law, throughout this gradation, defies the intermeddling of *mere* will, however energetically it may be exercised. It is on this account that our Lord's miracles were by Himself declared to be accomplished by the Spirit of God, and that the powers bestowed upon the Church were called spiritual, not physical, gifts; because, whilst they operated within the physical order, the source of their efficacy was from above. Accordingly, our Lord said, "I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me." *

§ 22. But, of all the miracles, there is one that stands apart in solitary magnitude and significance. It is that of our Lord's resurrection. To this, special importance is attributed in the New Testament. Our inward convictions, however strong, would be of little value, unless we could anchor upon this holding ground external to ourselves. Subjective feeling would, without this objective reality, end in disappointment. The true value

* John v. 36.

of such a miracle cannot, in this age at least, fail to be fully appreciated by scientific men, if only its historical reality is accepted. This is a vast gain to the cause of Christianity. It brings the whole matter to a definite issue. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." When miracles are lightly admitted, their force is not felt. The miracles of Moses were powerless so long as the "magicians did so with their enchantments." In presence of a thoughtful and scientific scepticism miracles recover their argumentative value if only they can pass the test of historical truth. For miracles, that are truly such, carry with them a large burden of proof. Hence the miracle of our Lord's resurrection is singled out as having special value. "Jesus Christ was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." We come to know "what is the exceeding greatness of God's power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." "God hath raised him up from the dead, that our faith and hope might be in him." *

* 1 Pet. i. 21.

SECTION 4.—CHRIST'S PERSONAL CLAIM.

§ 23. As a matter of fact, faith in Christ, as our first principle in Christian inquiry, is found to rest very much upon the ground of His own personal claim to our confidence. It is true that in various ages of the world men have advanced pretensions of a very extravagant kind ; and such men have generally turned out to be fanatics, madmen, or designing impostors. But Christ's character is such as to make it absolutely absurd and unjust to think for a moment that He could fall under either of these categories. Honest men, when fairly appealed to, may be trusted to say what they are, or believe themselves to be ; or to confess ignorance. In the case of most of us, conscious knowledge of ourselves extends to so small a portion of our being, that we should find it hard, if challenged with the question, *Quid dicis de teipso?* to give any very satisfactory answer. But it was not so with Jesus Christ. He could say, "I know whence I came and whither I go." He knew the secret of His own personality, and His special mission in the world. If such a man plainly tells us that He is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, and demands of us an unlimited trust in Himself as the condition of salvation, then the matter is at last brought to the decisive issue of the alternative, that Jesus Christ was all He claimed to be, or else that He was the most perplexing moral anomaly the world

has ever seen, working His way to the human heart by means of delusion and falsehood. Again and again the issue was raised during His ministry. I select a few examples, differing as widely as possible in form of expression and circumstantial occasion, in order that we may see with what clearness and constancy He claimed the absolute right to the obedience and trust of the world, as the Christ of God.

§ 24. First, there is the occasion on which the Jews plainly and earnestly appealed to Him, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" This is just the case we should regard as critical, and should await the answer with suspended breath, as the crisis of an experiment which was to determine the fundamental principle of Christ's religion. Jesus answered and said unto them, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." * There is here no uncertain sound.

§ 25. The second example is that recorded in the eighth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. Here the witness takes another form. It opens with the announcement of an enormous pretension. "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. Jesus answered and said

* John vi. 28, 29.

unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true : for I know whence I came and whither I go ; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh ; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true : for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.” *

§ 26. The third occasion to which reference may be made, presents our Lord’s testimony of Himself in another light. He had attracted so much attention that a great multitude went with Him. The time was come when He thought fit to make known what His claim really was. “ He turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” †

§ 27. The last and greatest occasion was that which resulted in His crucifixion. The crisis was brought on by Caiaphas. The real issue was on this occasion fairly raised. The high priest administered to Him the judicial oath in the presence of the whole nation, as represented by the Sanhedrim, and our Lord accepted it. St. Matthew relates the event. “ And the high priest answered and

* John viii. 12-18.

† Luke xiv. 25-27.

said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said : nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy ; what further need have we of witnesses ? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy." *

§ 28. Honest men may be trusted to understand their own views and purposes in life, or to confess their inability to do so when they are pressed upon the subject. If we begin to judge men's character by their actions, we soon come to judge their actions by their character. When we view Christ's claim to our confidence in the light of His character, we do not hesitate to give Him our entire trust. †

§ 29. Such is the evidence on which faith in Christ as the fundamental principle is founded. It combines nearly all the kinds of proof available before the actual trial of Christ's saving power was fairly made by the world. And if it should now be said that this amounts after all only to a moral proof, and not to an absolute demonstration, the

* Matt. xxvi. 63-65.

† This may seem like reasoning in a circle, but it is the universal method of progress in experimental knowledge, the alternate use of induction and deduction. Moreover, the type of the reasoning would be, not a closed curve, but an open spiral. The line does not return into itself, but carries us on to a higher plane at each return.

reply is that the salvation of the world, subjectively considered, is essentially an experimental process; and that in all experimental processes the only satisfactory demonstration is to be found in the progress and result of the experiment. "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord," says the Prophet Hosea. *Solvitur ambulando*. No other proof can be a substitute for this. The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power; that is to say, actual experience of its transforming influence is the only sufficient evidence of its validity. The gospel is declared by St. Paul to be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;" and it can only establish its claim by real success, not by logical demonstration. Supernatural help is therefore so adjusted, under a method of economy, as not to supersede the necessity of practical experiment, but to give us the requisite courage to attempt it. Just as we can only learn to swim by venturing into the water, so we can only understand the reality of salvation by venturing upon the saving process. If men once saw that salvation signifies a renewal of character after the image of Christ, and is open to immediate trial, and is not a mere bestowment of a reward in the life to come for the holding of certain orthodox opinions in this, the conditions of the whole question would be changed. And then it would be seen, with what nicety of adjustment the evidence has been arranged in the Divine administration, with a view to solicit and

to justify the venture of faith, but not to anticipate the final proof. To demand abstract demonstration, like that of a mathematical problem, is to try to defeat the very method of grace. Experiment offers the only demonstration that is of any value, or at all appropriate to the case. And if we ask, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" the answer is, "Come and see."

§ 30. In closing this chapter I will now ask the question, whether we are prepared entirely to commit ourselves to faith in Christ as furnishing the one great postulate, or first truth of our discipleship? and as the sufficient ground for an inductive use of the gospel facts? To a hard logic it would appear that every great principle must be entirely accepted or entirely denied; that there is no middle place; that the only alternative is an utter repudiation of Christ, or the total surrender of the mind to Him. In real life, however, the alternative is not so sharply defined, and logic must submit to the fact that there may be a great deal of real faith where there is also a great deal of unbelief. And so in asking the question, Do we really accept Jesus Christ as the all-sufficient and unchangeable Saviour of the world? I know how prompt would be the affirmative answer of thousands of loving souls who would scarcely understand all that their answer involves. I know with what heartfelt loyalty of devotion such persons would say, "We do trust the Saviour, and are ready to die for Him," without remem-

bering that to die for Christ is, by no means, the greatest thing or the hardest thing which we owe Him. Till we had a Saviour, our special duties to the Saviour—the ethics of salvation, so to speak—did not exist, and could not be exercised by us, any more than the duties of paternity could be exercised in the absence of the relations which they are intended to regulate. To be ready to die for Christ, is only one of our duties to Him. There are many things far dearer than life, and far more difficult than dying. Christ's special work in the world is the work of salvation; and that which pleases Him best is for us to submit, practically and intelligently, to His saving grace. He does not so much complain of the want of the spirit of martyrdom among His disciples, as of the want of spiritual sympathy and understanding. "To act is easy, to think is hard"—that is to say, unintelligent action is often easier than right thinking. Simple loyalty to Christ would lead thousands to the stake any day, if this were all that faith required; but faith must advance beyond the stage of simple loyalty before we shall succeed in the high achievement of "casting down reasonings, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

CHAPTER III.

THE DIFFICULTY OF REDUCING THE PRINCIPLE TO
PRACTICAL USE.

§ 1. In the preceding chapter it has been shown that mankind has come into possession of the truth that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, not so much by any natural intuition or process of inductive reasoning, as by various contrivances of Divine grace, so administered as to entice us to venture upon the experimental proof of Christ's saving power. In the present chapter it is proposed to point out some of the difficulties which, both in Christian experience and in the systematic treatment of the gospel facts, beset the endeavour to make a wise and consistent use of this great truth.

§ 2. I shall take occasion hereafter to consider at some length the conditions under which the growth of salvation must take effect in actual experience. At present I shall content myself with saying that Christian experience is essentially a moral process, demanding on our part both a consent of the will and an intelligent appreciation of its method; and is not, therefore, a natural or spontaneous development, which, once begun, may

afterwards be left to reach its maturity by the care of nature alone, as the wild trees are left on the side of the mountains. A moral growth that shall be true throughout to its constituent germ, can only be secured by constant watchfulness and readjustment. To continue true to the first principle, never to lose sight of it, to return to it again and again, to throw off all that is inconsistent with it,—these constitute, in regard to the spiritual life, both of the individual and of the Church, the condition of a growing discipleship. Moreover, it is not simply an adhesion to a truth, but also loyalty to a Master. “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” * This persistency of adherence to Christ is the one great moral difficulty. St. Peter speaks of the “trial of our faith, as being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, that it might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” † The severity of the trial is determined by the difficulty of preserving our “first truth” in its integrity; and the corruption of the Church, as a corporate body, is always measured by its divergence from the simple faith of Christ. The trial is not the less real because it

* John xv. 4, 5.

† 1 Peter i. 7.

has, in modern times, passed out of the region of persecution, into that of intellectual and scientific verification.

§ 3. Passing on to the intellectual view of the matter, the first difficulty we have to encounter in understanding the full scientific value of the great truth that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, arises from the very fact of its supernatural revelation. When principles are discovered by slow and gradual experience, their practical uses force themselves on the mind at every step; but when revelation anticipates experience, and announces the principles by direct communication, there is a special difficulty in perceiving their full significance. All great principles, indeed, when barely announced in their simplest form, to persons who have never seen them exemplified in the concrete facts in which their true character may be seen in practical operation, must appear as little better than vague generalities. Great truths (and great errors) can only be properly understood by us when they have grown up and bloomed and fruited in the real world. Till then, they are to us little better than barren truisms. Hence it is that a feeling of disappointment (like that which, I believe, generally accompanies the first untrained sight of celestial objects through a telescope) comes over the mind, when we first try, for scientific purposes, to look to Christ alone as the Saviour of the world. It is only as we continue to gaze upon Him, and fairly to get some real standard of comparison into rela-

tion with Him, and let the eye school itself by lengthened use, that we gradually become aware of His greatness and His glory.

§ 4. A further intellectual difficulty arises from the liability to which we are exposed of confounding one general principle with another, when these principles bear some mutual resemblance, and lie near one another in the same region of thought. There may, in reality, be differences among them of the most vital importance; and yet, till those differences are distinctly pointed out, they may be entirely overlooked by us. The greatness of this danger can scarcely be overrated; and that for this reason, namely, that error in principles reproduces itself in endless succession. Whatever resemblance such principles may bear to one another, as they lie before us in their most general form of expression, they are no sooner introduced into real life for practical use, than they begin, even at a short distance from their point of departure, to issue in distinctions which rapidly increase in magnitude and importance, at every step of their progress. At the beginning of our inquiry, we may throw ourselves upon one general principle out of several which seem closely to resemble one another, and which give promise of leading us to very much the same result, only to find ourselves carried far away from the home which we hoped to reach. It is important to furnish some examples of my meaning.

§ 5. First, faith in Jesus Christ may easily be

mistaken for faith in God; yet the distinction between the two as objects of thought is very decided. Faith in God is in a scientific point of view the basis of natural religion, and gives to faith in Christ its fundamental validity; and is, therefore, a principle of much wider range than the latter.* It carries us into the infinite and eternal. It deals with the great questions of natural and of transcendental theology. It engaged the thoughts of men long before Jesus Christ was heard of as the Saviour of the world. Whilst, on the other hand, faith in Christ is directed to specific statements and facts recorded in prophecies and in historical narratives. These constitute a definite object of study, subject to determinate rules of investigation. Although the gospel of Christ may, at last, have something to say upon all the questions which occupy the minds of men, it is presented in a definite record of very limited extent. At the outset it is, like the little stone of Nebuchadnezzar's vision, of manageable dimensions, although afterwards it becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth.

§ 6. Our Lord recognised the distinction to which I am inviting attention, when He said to the Jews: "He that is of God heareth my words."

* "Christianity is not only an external institution of natural religion, and a new promulgation of God's general providence, as righteous Governor and Judge of the world, but it contains also a revelation of a particular dispensation of providence, carrying on by His Son and Spirit, for the recovery and salvation of mankind, who are represented in Scripture to be in a state of ruin."—"Butler's Analogy," p. 127.

And, again, when He said: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

§ 7. And in actual life the distinction becomes very marked in the style of character which results from a Deistical faith apart from Christian influence, not only in Mohammedan communities, but also among the philosophical Deists of modern times.*

§ 8. We can know God as He really is only by Jesus Christ. Without Him, the true God is seen by us as imaged in the varying and distorted ideas of His character which our fear or our reason or our conscience or our imagination has created for itself. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."† "No man knoweth . . . who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." ‡

§ 9. Secondly, faith in Christ is to be distinguished from faith in the Holy Ghost, very much as the objective element in salvation is to be distinguished from the subjective. The Spirit's influence is, in experience, so blended with the operations of our own minds, that we are unable to determine what is His and what our own. Under these circumstances, we are exposed to the danger of mistaking the human for the Divine, and of becoming the subjects of mystical illusion. The fact is, no elevation of our spiritual nature will enable us to dispense with the truths of the gospel, and

* See Appendix.

† John i. 18.

‡ Luke x. 22.

the great objective facts of the Redeemer's work. Accordingly, our Lord in describing the work which the Holy Ghost was to accomplish after His own departure, says, "He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." *

§ 10. Thirdly, faith in Christ is not to be taken as if it were all one with faith in the holy Scriptures. The Bible has a most important office to fulfil in the salvation of the world, but it is to be distinguished from that occupied by the living Saviour Himself, and it is at our peril that we make it a substitute for Him. To put the Bible into Christ's place in our faith and worship would be to convert it into an idol, and idolatry always ends in stagnation and barrenness.

§ 11. Finally, faith in Christ is a principle quite distinct from faith in the Church. The confounding of these two, and the attempt to make the Church a substitute for Christ, and the Pope His vicar, has proved, in the history of the past, one of the most fruitful causes of mischief to the interests of Christianity. The Church is a Divine institution of the highest value, and, as such, it is to be trusted to do its proper work. But the Church is not identical with Christ as the Saviour of the world. It cannot do the work which it is His peculiar glory to perform. It cannot safely be

* John xvi. 13-14.

allowed to take His place in the love and worship of His disciples. When we look into Christ's face, we see a Divine beauty, which is very imperfectly reflected in the face of the Church. Although endowed with the perpetual gift of the Holy Spirit, and entrusted with the keeping of the Divine oracles, and made the receptacle of much of the realised salvation of the world, the Church is very far from giving to the nations an adequate representation of the person of Christ. She commits a grievous wrong against her Lord, when she fails to teach men to follow her, only so far as she follows Him. If Christ is no better than the Church, with all her imperfections and faults, the world would be justified in yielding to Him but a measured trust. It is not wrong for us to accept both articles of the creed: "I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord;" and "in the Holy Catholic Church;" but it is at a terrible risk that we fail to distinguish between principles which differ so widely from each other.

§ 12. Whilst making these distinctions, it must be borne in mind that there is a reciprocal relation between spiritual principles, just as there is a correlation among physical forces. No truth can be permanently isolated from other truths, or even be in other than definite relations to them. Every principle, however, has its own consequences, and requires, in the order of science, to be treated according to its own special character. Thus, faith in God gives rise to a science of theology. The

doctrine of the Holy Spirit resolves itself, at least for one of its practical purposes, into the theory of prayer, regarded as a method of inquiry into the mind of God. Faith in the holy Scriptures gives rise to the science of exegesis. And, finally, belief in the Church leads to the construction of a system of ecclesiastical polity and a Christian philosophy of history. But, distinct from all these, and yet intimately connected with them all, is the principle of faith in Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, out of which grows up the Christian theory of salvation.

§ 13. But the chief difficulty which we meet with in reducing the principle of faith in Christ to scientific use is of a still more subtle kind. It arises out of our tendency to worship general truths. Enthusiasm cannot bear what Lord Bacon calls "middle principles." * It will accept nothing less than the highest and the best. Anything short of these it regards as an unworthy compromise. When the empty hand of faith closes upon Christ, it grasps, so to speak, the whole Christ. To descend

* "And this seems to be the proper place for a logical remark, which, though of general application, is of peculiar importance in reference to the present subject. Bacon has judiciously observed that the *axiomata media* of every science constitute its value. The lowest generalizations, until explained by, and resolved into, the middle principles of which they are the consequences, have only the imperfect accuracy of empirical laws; while the most general laws are too general, and include too few circumstances, to give sufficient indication of what happens in individual cases where the circumstances are almost always immensely numerous. In the importance, therefore, which Bacon assigns, in every science, to the middle principles, it is impossible not to agree with him."—Mill's "Logic," book vi. chap. 5, sec. 5.

to subordinate principles and particular facts appears to be an abandonment of a higher position. Truth is one, and to break up truth into its constituent members, is as if we broke up a marble statue and took possession of it piecemeal. To speak of a part of Christ, is as if we spoke of a part of a crystal vase, or a strip cut off a fine picture, or the half of the living child in Solomon's judgment. Enthusiasm will have the whole or none; for here, the whole is far more than the sum of its parts, and to accept a part, instead of the whole, would be nothing less than to give up the principle altogether. Till men believe in Christ, it is an anomaly to urge upon them the details of a believer's duty. There is a previous question to be settled, and to go on adding link to link in a chain for which we have no firm fastening at its beginning, is to trust ourselves to an unreal support. The turning point in our destiny is the reality of our faith, and when that is determined we have actually passed into a state of salvation.

§ 14. Such is the argument of enthusiasm. And it is the truth of the argument, ill understood, that gives it its power of mischief. Faith in Christ is indeed an integral principle, or it is not faith at all. The whole principle enters into every separate act of faith. There are degrees of faith, but these are degrees of growth, not of parts. The faith that is as small as a grain of mustard seed has a real vitality that can remove mountains. The secondary processes derive all their value from their

relation to the general principle. What is fundamental in salvation is faith in Christ; and such a faith secures a union with the whole Christ, with all the principles on which His life was formed, with all the precepts and lessons which He taught, with the Spirit by which He was ruled, with His miracles, with all the mystery of His Divine nature, His incarnation, His death, His resurrection, and ascension. But although this is not all realised at once, it is really involved in the initial act of faith. All believers are in a state of grace. It is not the quantity of life that they have received out of Christ's fulness that determines their state; babes are no less partakers of human life than are grown men. The conception of a circle is a perfect conception, although the properties of the circle are not all discovered and defined till long after the conception has been formed. In like manner, faith in Christ does really comprehend all the problems of salvation; and, in receiving Him, we seem to have reached our very end and rest. All this must not only be admitted, but must be insisted on, as undoubted truth.

§ 15. But here lies our danger. General principles are among the most precious of our intellectual possessions; but just in proportion to their value are the moral conditions under which we hold them, and the penalties which wait upon our abuse of them. They are liable to be converted into the most pernicious "idols" of the mind, and that for the very reason that they seem so worthy

of our confidence. We are ready to ask, "Can it be wrong to trust in great principles? Is it not the worship of the highest truth? And can a true devotion accept any abatement, or the slightest compromise?" But this worship of great principles may easily become barren and unpractical. It has often been so with Christian professors. They seem to have reached their furthest limits by the earliest effort of their mind, and to have nothing else to do but to hold fast their ground. They appear to themselves to have cleared the whole space of Christian attainment at a single bound, and to stand with saints and martyrs, using the words of the apostle as their own, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." * Conscience is soothed by the pious feeling as if the whole work of our salvation were now at an end. We are henceforth impatient of details, and will accept nothing less than the fullest expression of belief. It is thus that the proverb is exemplified, that "the best is often the enemy of the good;" because the middle principles, and the particular duties of the spiritual life, are lost sight of, as of inferior value in the presence of the highest truth.

§ 16. "What then?" it may be asked. "Must we abandon our principles? Are we to tithe the mint and the cummin, and neglect the weightier matters of the law? Are the middle principles

* 2 Tim. i. 19.

altogether to take the place of all high doctrine in the conduct of life?" By no means. What we have to do is, to hold our higher principles in such a manner as to see that the practical result of holding them is to give validity to every single principle and fact that ranges under them. The whole principle of faith enters into every particular act of the Christian life, even though it only touch the hem of His garment. Is Christ the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world? Then to a true faith it follows that every word of His has the whole weight of Divine authority, and every act of His is the expression of some doctrine of life and salvation. This is His own way of putting the case. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" And hence the shame which attaches to us. Our very orthodoxy respecting our Lord's Divine nature is our condemnation. The higher our conception of His claims, the more are we bound to honour in detail every part of His doctrine. Those who put Him on a lower level might be justified, by a plea of consistency, in lowering the whole temper of their minds in regard to the several particulars of His teaching. But how can we, with our high thoughts of Him, patiently endure that so many of His works should continue to have no significance to our minds, and so many of His sayings be to us without any definite interpretation? Christendom appears to have been injured by its very advantages. It has inherited its great ulti-

mate truth at once, and has then forgotten that ultimate truths are also first truths, to be worked from when found, and not to terminate inquiry. Our justification by faith in Christ is, therefore, really our starting point, our entrance into the strait gate, from which our Christian pilgrimage, whether experimental or scientific, takes its departure. It is not our end, or only so our end, as to be our beginning too.

§ 17. To take only one example : faith in Christ carries with it, as a constituent part of its object, faith in the Sermon on the Mount, though this has not been written down in any of our Church creeds, nor been recognised by the decree of any general council. And then, faith in the Sermon on the Mount, as a whole, includes in it the following among a multitude of other things. It includes faith in the Beatitudes, as containing the true principles of human blessedness, however broadly they are opposed to the prevailing spirit of the world. It includes faith in the principle which pervades the social precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, namely, that "we are to accept duties rather than to insist on rights." And, to go no further, it includes faith in the Lord's Prayer, for this also forms part of the Sermon on the Mount. To believe in the Lord's Prayer, to believe that its petitions are based upon true hopes and true possibilities of humanity, is one of the greatest acts of faith, and it is only our faith in Christ that warrants it. Is it not, for

example, a great thing to believe, and, because we believe, to pray, that the will of God may be done on the earth—or even on so small a portion of the earth as London or Paris—as it is done in heaven, among angels and redeemed spirits, with all the constancy and undeviating regularity with which the planets obey the law of gravitation? If only so much of the will of God as is contained in the second table of the Ten Commandments were to rule our English life, how changed would the whole aspect of society become? Is it not very near fanaticism to believe in the possibility of such things? And yet these are but a few of the middle principles contained in the higher principle of faith in Christ. And the higher principle may be exhibited by us in any of the lower acts of faith, as obedience to His will; in the cup of cold water, for example, or the widow's two mites, or the gift to the poor in the Master's name. And in the order of experience, it is by such little acts of loving submission to the Saviour that the reality of our faith first discloses itself, and afterwards becomes developed. It is when Christ thus becomes a living power in our daily life, that all mere vague sentimental enthusiasm vanishes, and gives place to the real practical salvation which He alone can effect.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LIMITATIONS OF FAITH.

§ 1. In the preceding chapter we have seen some of the difficulties which meet us in our attempts to reduce the principle of faith in Christ to practical use. But perhaps a still more potent difficulty remains to be considered. And this is to be found in the relation which faith bears to those highest tendencies of our nature upon which the saving process is most needed because they *are* the highest, but which, all unconsciously to ourselves, offer the greatest resistance to Christ's saving work. To say that unlimited faith in Christ will be ready to accept all the limitations which it finds in Him, whilst an unlimited love or reverence or enthusiasm will submit to no limitation, but will break away into an unbounded indulgence of emotion, may seem like a paradox. Yet in reality it is no paradox at all ; it is of the very essence of faith to *exclude* as well as *include*. This is what the scholastic divines meant (I suppose) when they maintained that it is no less heretical to declare a doctrine which is not *de fide* to be an article of faith, than to deny an authoritative article of faith altogether. Christ is what He is ;

and the very idea of faith in Him implies a limitation of our trust to the reality of Christ, so as to shut out all the artificial products of our own feelings and the mistaken theology of the schools. Faith takes Christ just as God has given Him to us, and not as we may have conceived Him to be, according to some ideal standard or foregone conclusion of our own. We best honour the Son of God when we can so entirely trust Him that we can bear the "hard saying" without wishing Him to withdraw it, or desiring to hide its hardness from our minds, or having recourse to a timid "economy" in order to hide it from others. Faith regards it as a wrong done both to Christ and to ourselves to wish Him other than He is revealed to us in the gospel.

§ 2. It is this very thing that constitutes the value of faith; but it also constitutes its trial. Faith, in its resolve to keep hold firmly upon facts, has sometimes to oppose itself to the whole force of our affection, so as to keep it under restraint. Our unregenerate emotions are often too generous and self-willed to submit to the limitations which such a faith imposes. They refuse to be restricted to the mould of doctrine into which we have been delivered, * and persist in flowing over into a more unbounded loyalty and love, in spite of the simple claims of truth. Veracity and candour are even regarded as treason against the good cause, if veracity and candour oblige us to pause, to

* Rom. vi. 17.

check the strength of our feelings, and to revise the judgment to which we are committed. The result then is that an imaginary saviour takes the place of the real Saviour ; and as the false, however beautiful, cannot do the work of the true, the saving process comes to a standstill. The very facts out of which the great principles of the gospel are to be collected are passed over as of little value. To a true faith "a thousand difficulties," really existing in the facts, "do not make up one doubt ;" but then it is not because the difficulties are ignored, but because they are fairly met, as the very points at which fresh discoveries of truth may be made. Every real difficulty becomes a door of hope and possibility, behind which may be hidden unsearchable riches of truth. But if enthusiasm is allowed to escape from the regulation of faith, it will be like a mighty force wasting itself to no purpose. It is only when steam is subjected to the definite conditions of mechanical distribution that it becomes capable of serving the industry and commerce of the world. Indeed, all forces depend upon limitation and adjustment for their effective action. As in artillery the strength of the restricting tube determines the effective force of the discharge, so it is the strength of faith that gives effective direction to the mighty forces of our spiritual nature. Destroy the limitations, and the force of the explosion is dissipated.*

* "The pressure of air which would in the air-gun project a bullet a quarter of a mile, would, if allowed to take place without its direction

§ 3. The self-willed zeal which refuses to accept the limitations of faith, and which does not scruple, under the guidance of a blind credulity, to suppress facts and to indulge in pious frauds in the interest of a creed or a Church, has incurred the just reprobation of honest men. An example of this is furnished in the following severe censure taken from Mr. Lecky's "History of Morals." "The mediæval credulity had also a more direct moral influence in producing that indifference to truth which is the most repulsive feature of so many Catholic writings. The very large part that must be assigned to deliberate forgeries, in the early apologetic literature of the Church, we have already seen; and no impartial reader can, I think, investigate the innumerable grotesque and lying legends that were deliberately palmed upon mankind, as undoubted facts, during the whole course of the Middle Ages; can follow the history of the false decretals, and the discussions that are connected with them; or can observe the complete and absolute incapacity the Catholic historians so frequently display, of conceiving any good thing in the ranks of their opponents, and their systematic suppression of whatever can tell against their cause, without acknowledging how serious and how inveterate has been the evil. There have, no doubt, been many noble individual exceptions.

being regulated (as in the bursting of a bladder), not be perceptible at a yard's distance, though the same absolute amount of motion be impressed on the surrounding air."—Grove's "Correlation of Physical Forces," p. 9, 1st ed.

Yet it is, I believe, difficult to exaggerate the extent to which this moral defect exists in most of the ancient, and very much of the modern, literature of Catholicism. It is this which makes it so unspeakably repulsive to all independent and impartial thinkers, and has led a great German historian (Herder) to declare, with bitterness, that the phrase Christian verity deserves to rank with the phrase Punic faith. But this absolute indifference to truth, whenever falsehood could subserve the interests of the Church, is perfectly explicable, and was found in multitudes who, in other respects, exhibited the noblest virtue. An age which has ceased to value impartiality of judgment will soon cease to value accuracy of statement, and when credulity is inculcated as a virtue, falsehood will not long be stigmatized as a vice. When, too, men are fairly convinced that salvation can only be found within their Church, and that their Church can absolve from all guilt, they will speedily conclude that nothing can possibly be wrong that is beneficial to it. They exchange the love of truth for, what they call, the love of *the* truth. They regard morals as derived from, and subordinate to, theology, and they regulate all their statements, not by the standard of veracity, but by the interests of their creed." *

§ 4. In illustration of the limitation which faith imposes upon the ardent feelings and unwarranted expectations of Christ's disciples, the following

* Lecky's "History of Morals," vol. ii. pp. 224-226.

prerogative examples may be adduced for generalisation.

§ 5. The first of these representative instances is taken from that period of the Gospel history when, on the great confession of Peter, our Lord changed to a higher key the style of His teaching, and gave them the first intimation of the manner of His death. We are told that "from that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the chief priests, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." Faith in Christ would have at once accepted the announcement without staggering. But natural affection gained the mastery over faith. And so the narrative continues:—"Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."*

§ 6. A second example exhibits the mind of the same apostle in a state of rapid fluctuation between natural reverence and submissive faith, as antagonistic tendencies. It was on the occasion when Jesus washed His disciples' feet. "Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him,

* Matt. xvi. 21-23.

Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.”*

§ 7. A third example of the limitation to which zeal for Christ had to submit, is that furnished when the inhabitants of the Samaritan village refused to receive Him, on the sectarian ground that His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem. “And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.”† But even after this rebuke there are still some of Christ’s disciples who have so little faith in their Lord, that in their zeal for Him they regard toleration as a sin, and abstinence from persecution as a weak compliance with the spirit of the age.

§ 8. A fourth example of limitation, which the Church has in all ages found it hard to accept, is the renunciation of secular power as an instrument for promoting the triumph of truth. No trial of faith has perhaps been greater than this, and yet in no case is the Lord’s will more clearly revealed. When He stood before Pilate, in one of the most solemn moments of His life, and when every word He uttered had special meaning, He said, “My

* John xiii. C-2.

† Luke ix. 54-56.

kingdom is not of this world : if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews : but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then ? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”* The abstinence from all political resources, in favour of the free play of higher elements, is one of the most marked limitations of our Lord’s work. They were voluntarily declined. He could have commanded them, and would not. The alternative was within His choice, and He preferred to become the victim, rather than the wielder of such agency.

§ 9. A final example will complete the illustration of the point we are now contemplating. The occasion was that on which He refused to exercise the office of arbitrator between two brothers, when a dispute had arisen respecting inheritance. It seemed one which would fairly come within the scope of His mission, and the submission of the case to Him implied such a regard for His authority (selfish enough, no doubt) as few were then disposed to yield Him. And yet He declined to interfere. “In matters of this nature Christ would not assume, either a legislative power, to alter the law of inheritance ; or a judicial power, to determine controversies concerning them. He could have done

* John xviii. 36, 37.

the judge's part and the lawyer's as well as He did the physician's, and have ended suits at law as happily as He did diseases ; but he would not, for it was not in His commission."*

§ 10. What then? Had Christ nothing to do with social wrongs, but to let them go on undressed, neither escaping them Himself, nor helping those to escape them who came to Him for help? Had he nothing to do with human governments, but to let Cæsar indulge his ambition and secure his conquests? "It was not in His commission," indeed; but only because His commission had reference, not to the institutions of men, but to man himself; enabling him to reconstruct his institutions, precisely in proportion as his own renewed nature should require renewed and more spiritual forms of social administration. A country in which Christ's precepts were faithfully observed would require a very different order of government, if any government at all, from the country in which those precepts are violated every hour of the day. Change men's moral character, and you cannot but change their whole system of governmental rule. And this was Christ's special work. It is through men that Christ operates upon society. Christianity is not political, only because it is something so much deeper than political. It is not commercial, nor scientific, nor æsthetic, nor even moral, in the lower sense of the word, but only because these are not its ultimate characteristics. It goes deeper

* Luke xi. 13. Matthew Henry, *in loc.*

down to the roots of man's being than these. It primarily deals with him in his relation to God. But in saving man, Christ saves all that is worth saving in man. All corrupt institutions, all evil principles, and all dark superstitions must, as the salvation grows, perish for ever, either by being allowed spontaneously to decline and vanish away, or else by being formally abandoned by legislative enactment.

§ 11. These examples require to be generalised before we can apply them to the conditions of modern life. But what chiefly concerns us here is to observe that it is one of the offices of faith to define the limits of the sphere of our activity by shutting out from our view much that is foreign and extraneous to Christian inquiry. Faith will keep the soul patiently face to face with the realities of our Lord's life, for the purpose of thorough investigation by that *dry light* which is unstained by the false colours of the imagination and the feelings. In the early age of Christianity it was very hard to do this. To men with the religious education and prejudices which then prevailed, Christ's death upon the cross was simply shocking, and they did not stay to think whether it might not contain some great revelation of the age of Christianity. It was hard to do this. Christ's death upon the cross was simply shocking to men under the influence of the education and prejudices which then prevailed, and they were not likely to pause and think of the Divine significance of that

great event. "Christ crucified, was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness."* His death seemed proof enough that His life had been a wild delusion. And no wonder; for the last the world saw of Him was a mangled corpse—a victim, defeated, foiled, dead. I say the world, because none but His disciples saw Him after His resurrection.

§ 12. But in later times the trial of faith by the cross of Christ has taken another form. The superstition of men has too often converted it into a barren fetish; so that, instead of being the very mightiest instrument in promoting the world's salvation, it has, in such cases, become powerless for any effective operation upon human character. An exuberant sentimentalism has made it an object of superstition. Affection, when freed from intellectual and moral control, leads us to dote upon the objects of our regard, and then we live in a false atmosphere. Faith is, under such circumstances, the only safeguard against credulity. Faith gives us courage to sacrifice our fond imaginations to reality. It is the Christ of God alone who can save the world, and it is the very nature of faith to accept the limitations of truth, in order that Christ may carry out His saving work.

§ 13. It will be seen from what has just been said that Christian faith is the very opposite of a blind and indiscriminating credulity. The firmness of faith's hold upon Christ enables the

* 1 Cor. i. 23.

believer to treat the Christian facts as so much costly ore, out of which he may extract the metal of Divine truth. "He that believeth shall not make haste." Such a man can afford both to be calm in feeling and to wait long, just because he feels certain that the truth is there. He has the deepest interest in scrutinizing the facts, and in seeing that they really are facts and not fables. When satisfied, he will trust them, even though the general truths involved in them do not at once reveal themselves in his mind. Having once accepted them as true, he will subject them, as he would other facts, to scientific treatment. If no immediate results are found, he will not be ashamed to acknowledge ignorance, and to hold his judgment in a state of expectant suspense. And he will keep the facts on hand as a precious treasure, the use of which will some day become apparent. Such was the feeling of Columbus in relation to the strange vegetable productions he found in the new world. He had faith but not knowledge. He believed that they "would be of great price in Spain for tinctures, medicines, and spices;" and was only mortified to think that his ignorance of their true qualities hindered him from carrying them as a precious boon to his countrymen at home.*

§ 14. And it will be further seen that the limitations which faith imposes are not degrading to the soul, or to any of its constituent faculties. It may,

* Irving's "Columbus," b. iv. chap. 2.

indeed, be humbling to the reason to have to acknowledge its need of regeneration as well as development before it is qualified to perform its proper function well. It may be humbling for it to be, not simply the recipient and judge of Divine revelation, but at the same time a patient under the treatment of its healing power. But there is nothing degrading in such humiliation. It is only to acknowledge—what is no disgrace—that the soul is, in salvation, undergoing a new creation, and is not a mere cold, passive recipient, like a mirror which remains unchanged by the images that are formed upon its surface.* “All we, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.” We have no other faculty by which to receive the revelation, even though the faculty itself may need, for its effective working, to partake of the saving influence. To destroy reason, as the first condition of salvation, is to place ourselves altogether beyond the reach of salvation. It is as if we were to burn out our eyes in order to cure their defective vision. No maxim in therapeutics is more evident than that which says, *Remedia non*

* “The unlearned man knows not what it is to descend into himself or to call himself to account. . . . The good parts he hath he will learn to show to the full, and use them dexterously, but not much to increase them. The faults he hath he will learn how to hide and colour them, but not much to mend them; like an ill mower, that mows on still, and never whets his scythe: whereas with the learned man it fares otherwise, for he doth ever intermix the correction and amendment of his mind with the use and employment thereof.”—Bacon's “De Augment,” book i. chap. 8.

agunt in cadaver. There must be a stock-principle, or basis of life, for the action of the remedy. When life is extinct, no medicine can take effect. And so Bishop Butler wisely says, when speaking of the extent of our incapacity for judging beforehand as to the probable contents of a Divine revelation,

I express myself with caution, lest I should be mistaken to vilify reason, which is indeed the only faculty we have wherewith to judge concerning anything, even revelation itself." *

* Butler's "Analogy," book ii. chap. 8.

CHAPTER V.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF FAITH.

§ 1. HAVING now seen that faith in the immutability of the covenant of grace in Christ, furnishes the true ground for an inductive use of the gospel facts, it only remains to consider the obligations which such a faith imposes upon us as Christ's disciples. These obligations will be considered at some length hereafter. But there are a few remarks upon what may be called the logical, as distinguished from the ethical, requirements of the case, which may be more appropriately brought forward in this place than at a later period.

§ 2. Every principle is chargeable with its own consequences. Let faith in Christ be accepted by us as the first principle of salvation, and it immediately follows, from the reason of the thing, that we must accept Christ just as He is presented to us in the gospel. This is a necessary consequence, logically considered. For us to conceal or alter the facts, is not only to cheat ourselves out of the great gift which God has given us, but to stultify the most obvious dictates of reason. It is not possible for us to decide, *a priori*, what the Son of

God would say or do on coming into such a world as ours is ; but when we have once given Him our confidence, we are logically (not to say morally) bound to believe that everything He actually said and did is helpful to the salvation of the world. This conclusion is deduced from the premises, and stands firmly within its own acknowledged ground.

§ 3. Faith in Christ therefore demands that we should accept the "particulars," both of His teaching and conduct, as an actual expression of the Divine mind, according to His own repeated declaration. "The son," He said, "can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do : for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." And again, "I can of mine own self do nothing : as I hear, I judge : and my judgment is just ; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." * And again, "Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." † So that, however strange His words may seem, they are to us a Divine revelation, and we treasure them up as a precious inheritance, feeling that, though now we know not their meaning, we shall know it hereafter. It is this that gives to faith so much of that saving power which is attributed to it in the gospel, by shutting off the subjective interference of our prepossessions and false judgments. Confidence in a physician leads us not only to adopt the remedies he prescribes, but also to accept the

* John v. 80.

† Ibid. xii. 50.

limitations of quantity, of time, and of combination under which the remedy is exhibited. Were we to take twice the quantity, or take it twice as often as we are directed, the medicine might prove fatal instead of healing. So faith becomes triumphant, when it makes us willing to yield our preconceptions to those mysterious conditions of apparent paradox, of reserve, of silence, of seeming failure and disgrace by which our Lord's life is marked. That which to unbelief appears to be "the foolishness of God, and the weakness of God," becomes to faith "the wisdom of God, and the power of God."

§ 4. On the other hand, if logical consistency requires that we should seek for Christian truth in Christ, it does not require, as a result of faith in Christ, that we should believe in nothing else. Christianity does not abolish the laws of the material world nor the original principles of human nature, nor the social relations, nor the laws of evidence, nor the constitution of the intellectual world. It finds them here already, and it does not come either to ignore or dishonour them. Moreover, before Christianity came into the world there were great truths here, the ancient inheritance of the race, the product of human genius or of Divine revelation. Christ claims all these as His own, not only in right of His common brotherhood with us, but also as the eternal Word, the light of men from the beginning. He is jealous of no truth, and is too rich in His own right to need our lie to add to His wealth. He will not accept robbery for burnt

offering.* He does not seek to reign by the destruction of any legitimate power. He does not set Himself in opposition to the law of Moses or to the truths of the multiplication table or to the principles of geometry. He binds it upon us as a duty, to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, as well as unto God the things that are God's. And in so doing He teaches us the general principle (involved in that command) that we are to pay homage to the laws of *every* power within its own proper jurisdiction; whether, for example, it be to grammar, or logic, or philology, or history—to each what properly belongs to each.

§ 5. And if Christ claims no honour but that which truly belongs to Him, it is both illogical and unjust to attribute to Him the errors and mistakes of His professed followers. He has too often been "wounded in the house of his friends." And it is time that the evils which have been associated with His name, through our foolish assumptions of orthodoxy and self-vindication, should be acknowledged as our own and not His. Our faith in Him should be accompanied with such a diffidence in ourselves as to lead us constantly to say, "I am sure that He is right, but not so sure that I rightly understand Him." This would not rob us of certainty; it would only shift the ground of certainty from our own convictions, and place it

* "I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them."—Isa. lxi. 8.

constantly upon Him. Especially, Christ ought not to be held responsible for the enormous temerity of the men who set themselves up as the authorised and adequate representatives of Christ on earth, and so claim the submission of men's consciences to their decisions. Such persons could not maintain their position for a day if all Christians were loyal to their fundamental principle of faith in Christ. The fault lies entirely in ourselves. For if, whilst we profess to believe in Christ as our Saviour, we are so inconsequent as to allow fallible men to usurp His place of supremacy, in presiding over the evolution of the world's salvation, we are acting at the same moment both against faith and against reason.

§ 6. And if, on the one hand, Christ is not to be held responsible for spurious developments of Christianity ; so, on the other hand, there is in the world a vast amount of spiritual power which has been at work in relieving the misery of mankind, but which has never yet received a Christian designation, even though it originates in a Christian source, and is the actual product of Christ's Spirit. Outside the visible Church, and yet within the precincts of Christ's dominion, many works have been done by men who have declined to call themselves Christians. And may not this be Christ's will ? Does He not at times choose to forego associating His name with some of the most precious of His truths ? When He was here on earth, did He not sometimes heal men, and then " charge them that

they should not make him known"? When Christians are slow to perceive the true teaching of His gospel, does He not sometimes raise up men, who do not confess His name, to be teachers of His neglected truths? Not the less is it really His work, because He has allowed it to be separated from His name. This is no affectation on His part, but is based upon that deep law of human nature which sometimes gives to reserve a greater power of attraction over men's minds than to urgency of solicitation. Salvation is Christ's work, though it goes by another name, and is even attributed to Satanic influence, to rationalism, or to any other suspected origin. The agents, themselves, may be utterly ignorant that it is His Spirit that has been at work upon them. One thing they do know, that "whereas they were blind, now they see; but who hath opened their eyes, they know not." The Pharisees and the priests may blindly say it is the devil's work; but not the less true is it, that the devil is not likely to help on the cause of human salvation. For "if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?" It would be putting darkness for light indeed, were we, in the very midst of Christianity, to attribute the progress of science, of good government, of benevolence, and the removal of superstition, of persecution, of class pride, and of ignorance, to anti-Christian causes.

§ 7. I will add one word more. By the adoption of a method of discipleship which is the true logical

outcome of faith in Christ, and of a practical submission of our intellectual activity to His guidance, we may hope for results more nearly answering to the idea of a kingdom of Christ on earth than the world has yet seen—results the nature and extent of which will, perhaps, surprise none so much as those who have daily prayed for the coming of that kingdom, and who, letting down their net as best they knew how, have toiled through a long dark night and have taken nothing; but who nevertheless at His word letting down their net on “the right side of the ship, are not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.”

§ 8. In closing this part of my work, I will again say that in Christian inquiry we take the proposition that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world as our primary assumption. This we hold as a simple matter of faith, to be verified in the future experience of mankind. But it is not on that account an irrational assumption. We do not, indeed, pretend to furnish an exact mathematical demonstration of its truth, because such a method of proof is foreign to the subject-matter, and would in no way meet the practical necessities of the case. But we have a thousand excellent reasons for believing it to be true; and taking our departure from this point, we are not afraid to venture forward in our search for Christian truth. After all, we may succeed only very imperfectly in explaining how, by His life and

death, our Lord has actually solved all the problems of human salvation—physical, moral, and spiritual—and in what manner His redemption will be fulfilled in the conscious experience of mankind. But whether such a scientific enterprise succeed or fail, one thing is certain, namely, that Christ is the one true and immovable foundation upon which all Christian attainment in thought and character must be built up. Accordingly we find St. Paul giving the following exhortation to the members of the Colossian Church, and through them to believers in all after time: “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.” *

* Col. ii. 6, 7.

BOOK III.

*OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS IN THEIR RELATION TO
INDUCTIVE INQUIRY.*

"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord : his going forth is prepared as the morning."—HOSEA vi. 3.

"The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light."—LUKE xi. 34-36.

"Yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquity and understand thy truth."—DANIEL ix. 18.

"What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."—PHIL. iii. 7, 8.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE MORAL REGULATION OF THOUGHT.

§ 1. I now propose to go back to the beginning, and consider the whole subject of Christian inquiry from another point of view. In doing so, it will be my object to show that in the use of Induction certain ethical conditions must be observed, and that these conditions are to be found in Christianity itself.

§ 2. I shall begin by observing that true thoughts are essential to our effective use of the manifold gifts which God has bestowed upon us as intelligent beings; that our intellectual faculties are divinely adapted for the acquisition of true thoughts; that raw materials lie around us, capable of being converted into food and medicine and to the various uses of life; and that the forces of nature are ready to serve us all, on the simple condition that we come to understand their properties and conform faithfully to the laws which determine their action. No mere energetic exertion of will, or strength of arm, or untrained instinct, can give us full command over the resources of the outward world. Knowledge is power, and in the absence of knowledge we shall be poor, although

surrounded by abundant stores of wealth.* In the Arabian tale the door of the treasure cave, which remained closed to the importunity of ignorance and to the energy of despair, opened at once to him who could pronounce the word which expressed the law of its mechanical contrivance.

§ 3. If mere ignorance has deprived us of the full benefit of many Divine gifts, false opinion has often turned those gifts into positive evils. Many of God's creatures have become to us objects of imaginary terror and grovelling superstition. Things which might have been made to minister to our physical comfort and intellectual progress, have been converted into causes of pain and anguish. We have projected our own fears and false conceptions into nature, and we have then become the wretched victims of our own illusions. The world in which we live has, to our diseased imagination, borne but a slight resemblance to that world which God, in the beginning, pronounced to be very good, and which is slowly becoming good again to the regenerated and instructed mind of man.

§ 4. In nothing has wrong thinking been more

* Boyle has an essay entitled, "Of Man's great Ignorance of the uses of Natural things; or, that there is scarce any one thing in Nature whereof the uses to Human Life are yet thoroughly understood." He says: "This proposition will require to be somewhat solemnly evinced, not only because it is a paradox, but such an one as will meet with a peculiar indisposition to be entertained, since men cannot allow this paradox to be a truth without such a confession of their ignorance as must implicitly accuse them of laziness too."—Boyle's (Hon. R.) Works, 6 vols. 4to. 1772. Vol. iii. p. 470.

injurious than in its reaction upon the mind itself. Men have been slow to discover the physical and intellectual uses of external things, but slower still to find out the true conditions under which the intellect may be most successfully employed in its great office, as the minister and interpreter of God's works and word. There has been, on the one hand, the audacity of wild speculation, and on the other hand the repressive influence of usurped authority. Persecution has been employed to terrify those who have ventured to give expression to new ideas. Intolerance has pronounced it criminal to diverge from established opinion. Every kind of difficulty has been thrown in the way of the right use of the Divine gift of reason and thought. We have, in this one thing more than in any other, been blind to our truest duty to ourselves and to God; we have misused our faculties, wasted our intellectual force, and inflicted needless sufferings upon ourselves and our fellow-men. The cause of our backward state is not that our intellectual faculties are insufficient, but that we have made a faulty use of them; and, till we are prepared to take the blame to ourselves, there will be little hope of amendment.

§ 5. In the department of physical science all this is now sufficiently evident, not only to scientific men, but to mankind at large. The striking contrast which exists between the slow progress of discovery previous to the rise of the inductive philosophy and the rapid advance which it has since

made, serves to reveal to us the two facts: first, that with minds in no respects superior to those of the ancients, either in acuteness or activity, we are succeeding where they failed; and secondly, that as no new elements have been added to the material world, the poverty of the past was due to the wrong use men made of their minds, and not to the scantiness of their inheritance. The schoolmen, as we have seen, in laying down the rule that particular facts could afford no real knowledge of general principles, took up a position which is directly opposed to the modern axiom that all true science must be obtained by induction from particular facts. Moreover, they exhausted their mental activity upon questions of the most sterile and frivolous character; gravely disputing, for example, whether a pig driven to market is held by the man who drives it or by the cord fastened round its leg; whether more angels than one can at the same moment occupy the same point of space; and whether God, in knowing all things, knows universals or only things singular?

§ 6. Now, if true ideas and right methods of thought are so needful for the utilisation of our material resources, it would be very strange if they were not equally requisite to enable us to use aright our spiritual possessions. God has certainly not been less bountiful in providing for the wants of the soul than for those of the body. In Jesus Christ He has, "according to His Divine power, given unto us all things that pertain to life and god-

liness, through the knowledge of Him who hath called us to glory and virtue." As we stand in the presence of so vast a treasure, we are deeply concerned to study the true use of our mental faculties, in order that we may most effectually make it our own by a true mental apprehension. Giving and receiving are relative acts; and what is given to the mind must be apprehended by the mind before the act of giving has reached its proper issue. It is not a mere mechanical process of transfer. Spiritual giving and spiritual receptivity must bear a strict proportion to each other. *Quicquid recipitur, recipitur ad modum recipientis*. To take what God has given, is found, in practice, severely to task both our intellectual and our moral nature.

· § 7. That right thinking does not come spontaneously, appears from the fact that a vast amount of error has at all times found currency in the world. And when it is considered to how great an extent our whole conscious life is determined by the character of our thoughts--whether true or false—we may well ask, How is right thinking to be secured? The most obvious answer to this question is that right thinking depends upon a true interpretation of facts. But then it must be observed that in all inquiry (and not in Christian inquiry alone) success is dependent upon conditions of various kinds. There are, for example, the logical conditions of thought. These are purely intellectual; the mind must conform to them as the necessary laws of thought. There are also the moral con-

ditions of inquiry. These imply responsibility, inasmuch as they are more or less under our voluntary regulation and appeal to our own sense of right and wrong. These two classes of conditions give rise to the distinction between the logic of inquiry and the ethics of inquiry.

§ 8. The case may be stated in another form. That the intellect is subject to logical conditions, and that thought has its own laws, are facts implied in the very existence of the science of logic. But that the mind is subject to the regulation of other laws, both of a lower and a higher kind, is equally certain. Of the lower kind are those laws by the observance of which the physical organs, and especially the brain, may be preserved in the most healthy state, fitted to bear the strain of continuous and effective thought. These come more peculiarly within the sphere of medical science. Of the higher kind are those moral dispositions which are so essential to the pursuit of knowledge, and which come under the ethics of induction—self-denial, the love of truth, courage to face the reality of facts, patience to wait, and perseverance to endure. These lie beyond the province of the mere logician. It is upon the class of conditions to which these belong that I now propose to dwell at some length.

§ 9. All the constituent elements of our nature exist in a state of organic relation and subordination to one another. The moral faculty occupies the highest place. It acts, not by destroying the lower elements, but by availing itself of them, and

working through them. The action of vital laws does not supersede the lower physical laws ; nor do the physical laws, in their turn, abrogate the common properties of matter. So, again, intelligence works through vital forces ; and moral force does not violate the laws of intelligence, but seizes hold of them, and employs them for its own ends. It is thus that conscience, whilst acting according to its own special laws, exercises its supreme function by respecting the laws of every other faculty ; and in this way it subordinates all the forces of our nature, and makes them contribute their share to the formation of character and the spontaneous moral life of man.*

§ 10. Accordingly, the hand, the eye, the brain, has each its own special laws—mechanical, optical, sentient, as the case may be. The moral use of them in human life is not intended to destroy the special laws of their action. If, for example, I strike out my arm to deliver a blow, I must do it in accordance with mechanical conditions, or I may fracture the bone, whatever motive may influence me : in the act itself there is no moral quality, whether good or bad. But it is evident that in striking out my arm, and observing most exactly, and even with studied and cultivated training, those mechanical laws by which the leverage and the momentum of an effective blow are determined, I may inflict death upon a fellow-man, and so be guilty of murder ; and thus the physical act

* Murphy's "Habit and Intelligence," vol. i. p. 836.

acquires a moral character, and I am justly held responsible for the deed.

§ 11. In like manner, in the use of speech, I may strictly obey the rules of grammar, and yet at the same time I may be guilty of violating the higher rules of morality by uttering a lie or promulgating a slander. The goodness of the grammar will not neutralize the wickedness of the utterance.

§ 12. If the sphere of our physical activity is subject to moral regulation, can we for a moment suppose that the sphere of our intellectual life is exempt from it? Can we suppose that whilst we are responsible for the use we make of our bodily organs and our animal affections and appetites, we are not responsible for the use we make of the higher faculties of thought and reason? The fact that there are logical conditions of thought independent of the human will, can in no way justify Mr. Lecky in saying that it is "as absurd to speak of the morality of an intellectual act as to speak of the colour of a sound." The mere act of drawing conclusions from premises is, indeed, in itself a process as void of moral character as is the mechanical elevation of the hand or the grammatical use of the tongue; but the agent who performs the process imparts to the act a moral quality. Madness is said to consist in correct reasoning from false premises; but madmen are held to be free from responsibility because they are incapable of verifying their premises or of exercising a moral judgment in the inductive stage of the reasoning

process. It is a mistake to limit the sphere of morals to the appetites of the body, to the affections of the heart, and to the relations of social life, to the exclusion of our intellectual faculties.

§ 13. The enormous waste of mental energy which is continually taking place is not because the human intellect is unfitted, as an instrument of thought, for the purpose designed, but simply because the conditions of its use have been transgressed or neglected. The mind is like those machines of perfect construction, adapted to perform their respective work well ; which yet, in the hands of incompetent or vicious workmen, may be so conducted as either, on the one hand, to go through the mere evolution without any effective result, with a great show of activity, yet in fact grinding no corn, weaving no cloth, printing no books ; or else, on the other hand, put to bad uses ; or even escaping the driver's control, like a locomotive on the rails, only to produce devastation and ruin : whilst, at the same time, the laws of the mechanical operation are observed with unfailing regularity. So that, in our mental operations, not only are the specific laws of the mind to be taken into account, but we must also study the ethical conditions to which those laws themselves are subordinate.

§ 14. If conscience may rightly claim dominion over the intellect, conscience may in its turn profit by the light which the intellect can furnish. There is in the Divine mind a changeless and perfect moral ideal or law of human nature, and there is

among mankind a universal moral conscience, whilst practical morality as exemplified in the character and behaviour of men is capable of constant change and improvement. The objective standard of duty is quite distinct from the subjective sense of duty in any special cases of conduct in actual life. An "immutable morality" is not the same thing as an immutable conscience. Indeed it is in the regeneration and growth of our moral nature that our salvation chiefly consists. As we advance, moral distinctions continually become finer and more delicate. In a rude condition of the moral sense actions are broadly classified in a coarse way as good and bad, right and wrong.* It is only by slow degrees that finer moral judgments are formed. The neutral tints of the "colours of

* "In the progress of society, men's moral sentiments inevitably change, both from those alterations in circumstances which enhance or depress the value of certain qualities of conduct, and from that acuter insight or correcter appreciation of the tendencies of action which accompanies an advance of civilisation. From one or other of these causes, modes of conduct formerly regarded as of trivial moment grow into importance, qualities at one time extolled sink into dubious virtues, or even positive vices, acts once shunned are zealously performed and warmly approved, new duties are evolved from the novel situations in which men are placed, and the code of morality is amplified with rules which would have been unintelligible or undervalued at a previous period, because the circumstances to which they are applicable either had not then arisen or were wholly unregarded. Such changes may be seen by comparing either past times with present, or savage with civilised communities. The dexterous horse-stealer, an ignominious felon in England, is a consummate hero of the Crow Indians. How large the stride in moral sentiment from the blind and selfish superstition of the Shetlander, who runs away from a drowning seaman (under the notion that he who saves a drowning man will receive at his hands some deep wrong or injury), to the enlightened benevolence which plants a life-boat on the sea-beach to succour the stranded ship!"—Bailey's "Essay on the Pursuit of Truth," p. 7.

good and evil " grow in appreciation. And then conscientiousness or the idea of duty and responsibility is carried by us into regions of life in which taste or inclination or habit had before prevailed, unchecked and uncorrected. Accordingly we now recognize not only the ethics of social life (which must in some rude form have always existed among mankind), but we have a distinct idea of the ethics of religion, the ethics of art, the ethics of amusement, and even the ethics of war; so that all these several pursuits, in addition to their own special laws—mechanical, intellectual, æsthetic—have their moral aspects, and are not left to unrestrained instincts, tastes, or passions of mankind. Conscience claims jurisdiction over all the voluntary actions of moral agents; and as during the last three centuries inductive inquiry has grown into a common pursuit, so there has spontaneously arisen an ethics of induction; and a sense of responsibility is increasingly felt to connect itself with the method in which it is conducted as an essential condition of its success.

§ 15. When I speak of the moral conditions of inquiry, I chiefly mean those moral conditions which have immediately to do with inquiry, and not the moral conditions which belong peculiarly to some other department of human conduct. The duties connected with the investigation of facts are quite distinct from the duties of trade, or of domestic life, or of social intercourse. The virtues which belong to one sphere of activity are no necessary

security against the penalties awaiting the transgression of the laws which operate in another. Goodness of social character is no guarantee against hasty generalization. Piety has often coexisted with that *odium theologicum* which has proved so baneful to the progress of human salvation. Inquiry has its own laws, both logical and moral; and if these are faithfully observed, success will follow, even though in other directions there may be great defects of character. Even a lens of ice, if it is only constructed according to correct optical conditions, may be used as a burning glass, and will cause gunpowder to explode. A feeble intellect, freed from bigotry, prejudice, and superstition, may see truth, where great minds, under the influence of these vices, will be quite at fault. Our Lord is reported by the Evangelist to have said on one occasion: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight."

§ 16. In these remarks I have been speaking of scientific inquiry in general. Christian inquiry is only a special form of the general subject, and is, in like manner, amenable to moral treatment. "The meek," says the Psalmist, "will he guide in judgment; the meek will he teach his way." What moral qualities are included in that expression will, perhaps, appear as we proceed.

CHAPTER II.

OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS IN GENERAL.

§ 1. CHRISTIANITY, regarded as an objective revelation, given in the facts of our Lord's life, belongs, as we have seen, to the moral order. It is a phenomenon generated by moral causes. It exhibits in a human life a work in which obedience to moral law is as constant and uniform as that which the unconscious agents of the material world pay to the laws of nature. It is the product of Christ's voluntary and conscious acceptance of the will of His Father as the all-pervading law of His life in the conduct of that greatest enterprise that has ever been accomplished in human history—the redemption of the world. This we gather from His own words, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." * And again, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." The consciousness of a moral triumph was as real as the consciousness of a moral undertaking.

§ 2. I now go on to observe that Christianity, considered as a power designed to operate upon

* John iv. 34.

human thought and conduct, belongs also to the moral order—that is to say, it does not operate upon us mechanically or by any kind of physical necessity, but appeals to our moral consciousness and our voluntary acceptance. The gospel is a law to be obeyed as well as a truth to be believed. It prescribes duties and responsibilities peculiar to itself. In proposing to renovate the deepest sources of human character, it opens to our view moral possibilities of which we were unconscious before. It not only satisfies the actual aspirations of our nature, but it awakens new aspirations by creating a new heart and a new conscience within us by its regenerating power.

§ 3. Now the distinctive character of this moral power—the ethics by which the gospel is differentiated from all other systems—is to be found in the cross of Christ rather than the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. The overlooking of this fact has led to profound misconceptions as to the special nature of Christian ethics. A perfect morality, whether relating to our intellectual, our emotional, or our social life, is the law of the perfect man—the law in conformity to which moral perfection consists—and of such a law the Sermon on the Mount may be regarded as the highest expression ever given for human guidance. But man is not a perfect being; he is spiritually diseased; and the rules of conduct suited for a person in robust health would be death to a sick man. The precepts of behaviour which he needs in his

infirm state are precepts of healing and salvation. He must be dealt with as nurses deal with feeble childhood,* and physicians with disease. Any rules of conduct deserving to be received as a gospel from God, suited to the actual condition of the world, must answer the question of the awakened conscience of the sinner, asking, What must I do to be saved? Such is the doctrine of Christ, and to it may be applied the name of "Therapeutic Ethics," † inasmuch as it bears an analogy in the moral order to that branch of pathology which has for its object the treatment and cure of disease. The intellect has shared in the fall, and needs to partake of the salvation. If inquiry is a sign of imperfection, it is not less a sign of refusal to acquiesce in imperfection as the necessary and unavoidable condition of mankind.

§ 4. Moreover, there is in Christianity, when regarded as a system belonging to the moral order, another singular peculiarity. We no sooner enter upon the study of it under this point of view, than we become aware of the important fact that Christianity has introduced a new personal relation into human life, and with that relation a new class of duties, involving a readjustment of the moral poise of the world. The nature of those duties—the kind of feeling and behaviour due to Christ—must

* Solon, when asked whether he had given to the Athenians the best possible laws, answered, not the best possible, but the best they were able to bear.

† This phrase is used by Mr. Herbert Spencer. See "Social Statics," p. 181.

be determined by His personal character and the special rank He bears in the world. Before Christ came, the common relation of parents and children, masters and servants, rulers and subjects, and the like, gave occasion for the exercise and development of our moral nature. Christ has not only taken His place in this common brotherhood, and thereby acquired all its rights and accepted its obligations, but He claims a position altogether unique, as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. The validity of this claim is, to say the least, as real and as divinely sanctioned as that of any of the social relations existing among mankind, and it promises to play even a higher part as a factor in the total evolution of human destiny than any of them. Accordingly we find Him, as the Saviour, making demands upon our moral nature which are paramount even to those which arise out of the dearest of our earthly relations. This appears from such expressions as, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." To acknowledge Him as the holiest of men and the wisest of teachers, without receiving Him as our Divine Lord and Saviour, is to fail in the special duty we owe Him; and this would be as offensive as to profess to reverence the womanly virtues of the queen, whilst we refused to pay her our loyal homage as the rightful inheritor of the English throne.

§ 5. And then it is to be observed that this claim is no mere personal question between us and

Christ. The ethics of Christianity are ultimately based upon our relation to God. The duties incumbent upon us, in every condition of life, are determined by the wise and holy will of Him who made us, and who understands our nature, in all its weakness and in all its possibility, far better than we do ourselves. It is to this will we must at last appeal, and by it our own will must be determined, if we would work out our high destiny as the children of God. What that will is in regard to Christ is plainly made known to us in the gospel, especially in such passages as the following, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him." *

§ 6. And as the relation of Christ to mankind is thus paramount in its claims, so the saving grace of Christ is the very greatest power which God has entrusted to our stewardship. The forces of nature which we are permitted to use, and which form the ground of our physical efficiency, operate irrespectively of the moral character of men: they take effect upon the evil and the good alike. But Christ's saving power depends for its operation essentially upon the moral susceptibility and voluntary co-operation of our own minds. This moral susceptibility and this capacity of voluntary action are the free and sovereign gifts of God, but the

* John v. 22, 23.

exercise of them is, in the very highest sense, our own. Salvation is not forced upon us by any outward authority, or physical necessity, or mystic rite. It appeals to our conscience and reason. And if through ignorance or neglect we fail to use it, it becomes for us a wasted power, and we may then be said to "receive the grace of God in vain."

§ 7. That our Lord has ascended into heaven, does in no way weaken His claims upon our dutiful regard; it only alters the conditions under which we are now required to meet them. To take only one example of this change. Whilst He was here it was possible to manifest towards Him all the endearments of personal affection. Mary could sit at His feet and hear His word. Matthew could leave the receipt of custom to follow Him. The sons of Zebedee could forsake their father to devote themselves to Him as disciples. Women could minister to Him of their substance; and Mary could bring the alabaster box of ointment to pour upon His feet. But these forms of service are no longer possible. He is now represented by the hungry, the naked, the sick, the stranger, and the prisoner—as we gather from the judgment scene in St. Matthew—and mere personal affection is not enough to enable us to solve all the problems involved in such a service. The claims of Christ now force themselves upon us as questions of social science, and are projected upon a scale as vast as the evils from which He, as the Saviour of the world, has undertaken to redeem us. It may surprise some

to learn that such a service of philanthropy is to be regarded as done to Christ Himself; yet this conclusion is warranted by the words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." *

§ 8. It is not needful, for my present purpose, to follow this subject any further. It is enough for us to observe that the ethics of Christianity are what may be called the ethics of salvation, and that they take their peculiar and distinctive character from the personal claims of a Divine Saviour and the feelings and behaviour due to Him from the race He came to save. "The office of our Lord being made known," says Bishop Butler, "and the relation He stands in to us, the obligation of religious regards to Him is plainly moral, as much as charity towards mankind is; since this obligation arises before external command, immediately out of that His office and relation itself. . . . And these relations being real, there is no reason to think, but that neglect of behaving suitably to them will be attended with the same kind of consequences under God's government as neglecting to behave suitably to any other relations made known to us by reason. And ignorance, whether unavoidable or voluntary, so far as we can possibly see, will just as much, and just as little, excuse in one case as in the other; the ignorance being supposed equally unavoidable, or equally voluntary in both cases." †

* Matt. xxv. 40.

† Butler's "Analogy," part ii. chap. 1.

CHAPTER III.

IS CHRISTIAN INQUIRY SINFUL?

§ 1. WE have seen in the last chapter that the style of our behaviour towards Christ is essentially of a moral character. We have now to observe that it is thus raised out of the region of mere taste and emotion into that of intelligence and conscientious conviction. The question of right and wrong enters into the whole of our feelings towards Him ; and, in particular, into our intellectual attitude and bearing. I shall, therefore, not hesitate to ask, Whether it is sinful to use the method of induction in the interpretation of the life and work of Christ, as they are exhibited in the original facts of Christianity?

§ 2. Now, inductive inquiry, regarded as the method by which doctrinal truth is collected from particular facts, is necessarily independent of dogmatic authority, and demands the freest exercise of private judgment. Moreover, induction represents an aggressive movement of the mind. The passive intellect is, in inductive inquiry, converted into the active reason. Seeing becomes looking. The mind is stirred from a condition of mere receptivity, and becomes inquisitive, prayerful, and

importunate. To inquire, is to venture forward, to incur risk, to gaze into the unknown, to analyse, to test, and (to use the word in the sense in which it has been applied to this process) to torture the facts till we wring from them the secret truth they contain.

§ 3. "Now," it may be asked, "is not such a use of the intellect altogether unbecoming the delicacy of those moral relations which bind us to Jesus Christ as our Divine Saviour? If the idea of duty enters into the question at all, does it not appear to be our duty to abstain from any such process of reasoning, and trust entirely to the insight of love and the immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit? Whatever else may be subjected to the 'dry light' of inductive investigation, ought we not to shrink from applying it to the sacred facts of the Redeemer's life and Passion, as we should shrink from committing an act of impiety?" Such questions have been asked by many minds; and there are, in our nature, certain tendencies which prompt us to believe that such questions have a right to be heard, before we can feel satisfied that Christian inquiry is a holy duty and not a sinful presumption. Let us see what those tendencies are.

SECTION 1. — TENDENCIES WHICH SEEM OPPOSED TO THE USE OF INDUCTION IN CHRISTIAN INQUIRY.

§ 4. *Love*.—It has been said that in Christianity love is the true organ of knowledge, and that truth

reveals itself to the heart, whilst it conceals itself from the mere logical faculty. This may be accepted if only we understand what is meant by love and what by logic. As to logic, if mere metaphysical or deductive processes of thought are meant, then logic can do very little for us in the interpretation of Christ's words and works. And as to love, if mere personal affection is meant, then all that can be said is, that so far from being the organ of knowledge, there is nothing more apt to prejudice the mind, and so to interfere with clearness of insight into the truth of things. The only love that can truly be said to be the organ of knowledge is the simple love of truth for its own sake; and such a love of truth respecting our Lord's person and work will grow out of a real faith in Him as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Christ is the Truth, and truly to know Christ is better than falsely to know Him; and if induction is one instrument among many by which we may succeed in the study of Christ, it becomes our duty to employ it for this great purpose.

§ 5. *Reverential Awe*.—There is a feeling natural to the human mind which easily takes alarm when warned against a presumptuous intrusion into sacred things. This, like all our natural instincts, has its true use; but unless held under moral control, it is apt to degenerate into superstitious fear and cowardice, under the influence of which the understanding (which is also a natural endow-

ment, and has at least an equal right to be exercised by us) is altogether paralysed and all science discountenanced. For example, Pliny thought it a thing dishonouring to the Divine Being on the part of the greatest of the Greek astronomer, Hipparchus, that he should have undertaken to count the stars, and to determine their relative position. In the same spirit, a few years ago, a young man went from Cheltenham to Ireland, and attempted to destroy Lord Rosse's telescope, pleading in defence that he considered it blasphemy for man to scrutinize too closely the works of the Creator. Such a spirit is altogether contrary to the words of the Psalmist, "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." Such a spirit would have checked the Jewish children as over-curious when at the sacrifice of the pascal lamb they asked their parents, "What mean ye by this service?" And when introduced into Christianity, such a spirit would deem it inconsistent with due reverence to endeavour to attach a doctrinal significance to the circumstances of our Lord's death.*

§ 6. It cannot be denied that in calm scientific

*Thus, in a recent essay on the Atonement, the writer denies the possibility of our Lord's having ever been miserable whilst bearing our sins on the cross. He says, "Not for a single moment dare we suppose that the Only Begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, the Holy One of God, could have been in this condition." And then he adds in a note, "The *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*, cried out on the cross, is surely at no variance with what I say. We dare not, while we reverently listen to it, shape dogma out of that cry."—"Tracts for Priests and People." No. iii. p. 10.

investigation all bias of natural affection requires to be kept in check, and so long as the intellect is predominant, the devotional feeling seems to suffer. In suppressing our emotional activity, we are apt to think ourselves the poorer in spiritual experience. But the fact is, every faculty of our nature has its own special laws, and each must be allowed freely to fulfil its own conditions, in order to contribute its full share to the ultimate harmony and regeneration of the soul. It is easy to say that "truth is for the heart rather than the intellect." But the intellect must do its part as the caterer of truth for the heart's use. In the long run, if only fair play is allowed, one faculty will minister to another. Reason is not necessarily injurious to the devout affections. On the contrary, Christian inquiry, when properly conducted, will give to devotion a purer and truer form of thought than it had before. And none can doubt that the devotion which has the clearest vision and worships in the purest light is the most acceptable to God.

§ 7. It was not reverential awe but intelligent sympathy that our Lord sought to awaken in His disciples. He expressly said to them, "Henceforth I call you not servants ; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth : but I have called you friends ; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."* He has even insisted that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood ; which (unless we understand the words

* John xv. 15.

in their most materialistic sense,) must signify such an intelligent and spiritual apprehension of the truth which is embodied in His life as shall enable us, by true processes of thought, to assimilate and reproduce it in our own life. It cannot be wrong for us thus to eat the flesh and to drink the blood of the Son of man. It is a false reverence to regard the gift as too sacred for the mental action needful for the intelligent appropriation of it. The piety which stands before the cross, and only allows the emotional part of our nature to come into action, whilst the understanding and the conscience are suppressed, is not the piety which finds the truest fellowship with our Lord in His sufferings and the truest conformity to Him in His death.* Moreover, it is possible to convert the cross itself into a fetish, and thereby to make the very instrument of salvation a means of perpetuating among men the dark reign of superstition.

§ 8. *Respect for Authority*.—A separate chapter will be devoted to the consideration of the subject of Authority in a later part of the present essay. In this place the question is, not whether Authority has a real and legitimate place in the development and transmission of Christian doctrine, as it has in the discovery and diffusion of scientific truth, but whether the peculiar claim to infallible dogmatic authority set up by the Church of Rome partakes of this legitimate character; and especially whether the Inductive Revolt (as I will

* Phil. iii. 10.

venture to call it), which began at the Reformation, and which is destined to become more profound and widespread as the nature of the inductive process comes to be better understood and more carefully applied to the interpretation of the Christian facts, is to be regarded as a rebellion against the Divine order, and is accordingly to be repudiated as a sin against Christ ?

§ 9. The Pope, as the head of the Church, grounds dogmatic inculcation upon infallibility, and infallibility upon Divine inspiration. His argument is, that the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Ghost, raises the voice of the Church into the voice of God, and that to appeal from the voice of God, *thus uttered*, to any tribunal whatever, (even to the tribunal of the gospel facts), is to reject the Divine authority, and is, clearly, both treason and heresy. In this assumption of divinity, if it is only allowed, he obtains a logical basis for the claim to dogmatic authority. But he does so at the enormous cost of taking up the position which St. Paul attributes to the man of sin, "who exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."*

§ 10. But Rome is not contented with the claim to Divine inspiration and infallible authority. She has also committed herself to the scholastic logic, as furnishing the true method of investigating the

* 2 Thess. ii. 4.

doctrinal significance of the gospel, and of constructing the science of theology. I have already quoted the words of Cardinal Manning on this subject (p. 27) ; I will now give those of the Pope himself. They are taken from the Syllabus of 1864, which denounces the reigning spirit of modern civilisation, and especially freedom of religious inquiry. It says, "By our apostolic authority we reprobate, proscribe, and condemn all and singular the evil opinions and doctrines severally mentioned in this letter, and will and command that they be thoroughly held, by all children of the Catholic Church, as reprobated, proscribed, and condemned." Among the opinions thus reprobated is the following, that "the method and principles whereby the ancient scholastic doctors cultivated theology, are not suited to the necessities of our times and to the progress of the sciences."*

§ 11. As I am engaged in treating of a scientific method as a question of Christian ethics, I have no right to complain that the same should be done in the "Syllabus." On the contrary, I feel that until we can fairly view it in this light, and bring

* "Methodus et principia, quibus antiqui doctores scholastici theologi excoluerunt, temporum nostrorum necessitatibus scientiarumque progressui minime congruunt." (Syllabus xiii.) Before the publication of the Syllabus, Dr. Newman was disposed to regard the scientific method of modern science as too recent to have come fairly into the region of theological encounter. "Let it be observed," he says, "I have not here to speak of any conflict which ecclesiastical authority has had with science, for this simple reason, that conflict there is none ; and that, because the secular sciences, as they now exist, are a novelty in the world, and there has been no time yet for a history of the relations between theology and these new methods of knowledge."—"History of my Religious Opinions," p. 264.

it to the test of a higher authority than that of Rome, it will still be an open question whether the method of the scholastic doctors or the antagonistic method of induction is the true method of scientific research. To this subject I shall return hereafter.

§ 12. *Mysticism*.—Mysticism is a kind of devout rationalism, which makes the human consciousness, in its most exalted condition, the measure of truth. It attaches comparatively little value to historical facts. It claims to know Christ by immediate intuition, without any careful study of the record of His life ; and it gives little attention either to the logical or the moral regulation of Christian thought. Neither reason on the one hand, nor conscientious diligence on the other, has any considerable part in the work.

§ 13. Mysticism often leads to Quietism. That there is a normal relation between the human intellect and Divine truth, and that our mental conflicts will at last issue in an adjustment of perfect rest and quiescent contemplation—the true Sabbath of God—is the great hope of the Christian life. But in our present condition of discipline, to settle down into such a state of passive receptivity, would be (to all but a few favoured persons) to create for ourselves a premature heaven. We must fight the good fight of faith before we can sit down with Christ on His throne. At present we can only get our heaven by snatches and foretastes. It is needful for us to labour, that we may

enter into His rest. And this applies to our intellectual as well as to our emotional life. Right thinking is as difficult, and involves as mighty a moral conflict, as right feeling. In the Christian warfare we have to conquer wrong thoughts quite as much as evil passions. That warfare, according to St. Paul, has for its object the casting down of imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. This is what the Mystic does not understand. And so whilst he admits that watchfulness and self-denial are needful in the general conduct of life, he is surprised to be told that religious emotion also needs intellectual and moral control.

§ 14. *Dependence upon the Holy Spirit.*—There is in many minds a false feeling of dependence which professes to honour God by renouncing responsibility for the right conduct of thought. Such persons resist all attempts to form a scientific method, as an unholy interference with the sovereign influence of the Holy Spirit upon the human heart. Sometimes this feeling amounts to fatalism; and this, in its turn, when it reasons at all, adopts a short logical process, regardless alike of the facts of human nature and of God's revealed will, to the effect that, if we are to be saved, we shall be saved.* My only answer to such persons

* "*Ignava Ratio*, or *Sophisma Pigrum*, is the master fallacy of Fatalism. It might be classed with the fallacies of Non-observation. The Fatalist argues that if a thing must happen it will happen, whether he interferes or no, overlooking that his own agency is one of the co-operating causes."—Bain's "*Logic*," vol. ii. p. 482.

is, that the only true order of dependence upon God in Christian inquiry is that which accepts the help of the Holy Spirit as a moral power which does not supersede our own moral activity, but works through it.

§ 15. These tendencies and prepossessions of men's minds have here been dealt with, in order that we may not be haunted, as we advance, by a latent suspicion that we are treading on forbidden ground and indulging in an unholy curiosity. If inquiry into the meaning of the Christian facts really violates any holy instinct of our nature, or in any way puts dishonour on the Saviour we love, it must be sinful to pursue it; and any exposition of the laws and methods of the process would be teaching men to sin by rule. But after all, the question for us, as believers, is simply, What would our Master have us do in the case? Our faith in Him will be a sufficient warrant for attempting any mental enterprise to which He invites us, however perilous it may be, and however opposed by the unregenerate feelings of natural piety or superstition.

§ 16. But we are not left in doubt upon the subject. To regard it as a sinful use of the mind for us to do our best to understand the meaning of our Lord's life, would be to contradict the whole tenour of the gospel. Does not Christ yearn to take us into sympathy with Himself? Is it not in grief that He reproves the dulness of our perception when He says, "Perceive ye not yet, neither under-

stand? have ye your hearts yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and do ye not remember? . . . And he said unto them, How is it ye do not understand?" Such demands upon our intelligence may possibly awaken our self-pity, as if they tasked us too severely; but they certainly do not make intellectual effort a crime. Inquiry is not an easy task; but if our Lord demands it of us, we must not shrink from it when He calls us to undertake it. "It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." Is it then right for the bride to say, in answer to such solicitation, "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?"*

SECTION II.—OUGHT FAITH IN CHRIST TO PUT AN
END TO CHRISTIAN INQUIRY?

§ 17. This question involves the most difficult problem respecting the duty of Christian inquiry. To some persons it appears nothing short of a simple absurdity to "call ourselves believers and inquirers also," and that "our common sense must tell us that if we are seeking we have not found."† The late Dr. Arnold felt the difficulty, but did not see his way to its solution, though he did not despair of the solution being some day found. He

* Cant. v. 2, 8.

† Newman's "Grammar of Assent," p. 184.

says, "What I crave to see, and what seems to me to be no impossible dream, is belief and inquiry going together." There are others who, so far from sharing this hope, declare that faith is irreconcilable to the moral conditions of inductive inquiry. One writer says, "Whatever accustoms people to a rigid scrutiny of evidence is unfavourable to religious belief." Mr. Lecky says: "Intellectual virtues are wanting where a believing spirit is made essential to goodness." The same writer says more at length: "An elaborate process of mental discipline, with a view to strengthening the critical power of the mind, is utterly remote from the spirit of theology; and this is one of the great reasons why the growth of the inductive and scientific spirit is invariably hostile to theological interests. To raise the requisite standard of proof, and inculcate hardness and slowness of belief, is the first task of the inductive reasoner. He looks with great favour upon the condition of suspended judgment; he encourages men rather to prolong than to abridge it; he regards the tendency of the human mind to rapid and premature generalization as one of the most fatal of its vices; he desires, especially, that that which is believed should not be so cherished, that the mind should be indisposed to admit doubt, or, on the appearance of new arguments, to revise with impartiality its conclusions. Exactly in proportion as men are educated in the inductive school, they are alienated for those theological systems which represent a condition of

doubt as sinful, seek to cover the reason by the interests and affections, and make it a main object to destroy the impartiality of the judgment." *

§ 18. Our best chance of solving the problem is by looking at the facts of the case in real life, instead of making it a matter of verbal argument. The beginning of conscious discipleship constitutes a point of transition by which the life of the believer is broken into two parts, one going before faith, and the other following after faith. Inquiry before faith, has for its object the investigation of the evidence by which Christ is to be accepted as indeed the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Inquiry after faith, has for its object to discover all the truth that is in Christ, and to bring the great principles of His gospel into practical use, as the power of God and the wisdom of God, in the salvation of the world.

§ 19. *Inquiry before Faith*.—To take the lowest ground, and looking at the original facts of Christianity simply as matters of scientific interest, it surely cannot be wrong to study a collection of phenomena which, whether they are true or false, must, at all events, throw considerable light upon human nature. No one who accepts the method of induction, and who, consequently, regards all facts, even those of disease and imposture, as having an intellectual value, can think it sinful to examine the evidences of Christianity in order to ascertain whether Jesus of Nazareth really did

* Lecky's "History of Morals," vol. ii. p. 206.

claim to be Son of God and the Saviour of the world; whether He did actually perform the wonderful works attributed to Him, and speak the wonderful words He is said to have uttered; whether He died, and afterwards rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. In the adoption of such a course of investigation there will no doubt be the probability of conversion, but no lover of truth will think it sinful for any man to give himself a fair chance of becoming a Christian.

§ 20. In a Christian community this process of inquiry, as preliminary to faith, is generally abridged, and even superseded, by the beautiful order of the "schooling (*παιδεία*) and admonition of the Lord"* in the Christian family. The gospel facts are accepted because we are taught to accept them. They are not proved, but are taken for granted. What are called the evidences of Christianity have a very small share, if any, in producing belief; and the negative evidence, as it is called, or the absence of any opposing testimony, has left the early belief undisturbed. And so, faith in Christianity, like faith in so much else, is the result of education and habit. And if the facts are really true, such an abridgment of the process is a great advantage. It does not so much matter how we come to believe in Christ, as that we do believe in Him. The real value of faith lies in the use it afterwards leads us to make of Christ as the Saviour of the world. Whether the faith

* Eph. vi. 4.

comes as the result of private inquiry or of early training, is of little consequence, so long as it puts us upon the experimental use of Christ's saving power.

§ 21. The same remark applies, with still greater force, to those cases in which preliminary inquiry is superseded by spiritual conversion to Christ. When God is pleased to reveal His Son in us, our reason dispenses with the external proofs of His Divine mission. Experience of Christ's saving power is the most rational of all grounds for believing that He is the Saviour. Indeed, without this as the end of all other evidence, no preliminary investigation could arrive at its proper issue. And when the process of salvation becomes a conscious experience, faith itself appears quite a different thing from a mere intellectual conviction, produced by a preponderating balance of evidence. Having once tasted how sweet the bread from heaven is, we are ready to say, with the Jews, "Lord, evermore give us this bread."*

§ 22. In this way faith in Christ may arise without any formal investigation of evidence. But there are cases in which the advantage of a Christian training does not exist, and then the examination of evidence becomes a necessity, if conversion is ever to take place. Men who know nothing of Christ cannot trust Him. His character and claims must become known before it is possible for men to venture upon the proof of His saving power. It

* John vi. 84.

becomes the duty of all to whom the gospel is preached to examine its evidences, and to use all the helps within their reach to arrive at a true conclusion. Our Lord said to the Jews: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." So far, at least, the way is clear; inquiry is not sinful.

§ 23. *Inquiry after Faith.*—In looking at the second of the two views of our intellectual relation to Christ, we find ourselves on the other side of the point of transition. Discipleship has been accepted. Being in Christ Jesus, we have become new creatures. New relationships bring new duties. Such duties have in them all the force of moral obligation. To violate moral obligation is sin, and sin is ever attended with penalty. So that the question arises, "Ought faith in Christ to put an end to all further inquiry? Are these two—faith and inquiry—entirely inconsistent with each other?"

§ 24. If by Christian inquiry were meant nothing beyond the kind of tentative or preliminary investigation of the evidence of Christianity and of the trustworthiness of Christ which has been spoken of above, then our reply would be that, logically speaking, the two cannot stand together; that having, by whatever means of persuasion or of Divine grace, given Christ our confidence, it is no longer an open question. To a true faith the matter is already settled. Rest in Christ is the

believer's postulate or fundamental truth. Christ is his fixed point. Christ is his Rock. Here he stands, though the whole spiritual world is shaken around him.

§ 25. In this sense faith puts an end to inquiry, and that for the very sufficient reason that inquiry has reached its proper issue. And this can be no hardship, and imposes no false limitations upon human reason. We may even open the question afresh, if we please : there is nothing but our faith to hinder us from doing so. We have the same liberty as that which was possessed by the early pilgrims to the city of God, of whom we read : "And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned." But then, in the very act of returning, we are giving up our faith, and we cannot walk on both sides of the street at the same time.

§ 26. Even after faith has put an end to inquiry, it is not inconsistent with the most undoubting confidence in the firmness of our foundation to marshal the arguments for the truth of Christianity, either for our own satisfaction or for the conviction of other men. But supposing it to be proved over and over again, once every year, that Christ is indeed the Saviour of the world, the question which still awaits us with ever patient endurance, and which must, sooner or later, be met, are these. And what then ? Is the investigation of the credentials of Christianity the highest use to which

Christ puts the minds of His disciples? Are we next year to return again to the weary work of reaping afresh this harvest of barren proof, which, after all, can never issue in a logical demonstration? May we not even suspect that there is some far more fruitful method of dealing with the Christian facts? and that this incessant demand for Christ's credentials is nearly as impertinent as to demand the credentials of the food which nourishes us, or of the sunshine which warms us, or of the mother who loves us?

§ 27. In reality, faith in Christ, whilst putting an end to the cautious forethought of preliminary investigation, becomes the point of departure for that great inductive inquiry into the contents of Christianity, and the application of its hidden resources to the spiritual wants of mankind, which will give the final proof of Christ's saving power. This experiment must end, if rightly made, in the actual salvation of the world, or (if there must be an alternative) in the demonstration that Christ is a Saviour who cannot save the world.

§ 28. Let the inductive method of dealing with the original facts of Christianity be accepted, and we shall hear no more about "the absurdity of calling ourselves believers and inquirers too." To believe that the salvation of the world is contained in Christ, must stimulate the mind to its utmost endeavour to seek for it in Christ. The reality of the faith is to be exactly measured by the activity of the search to which it gives rise. To abandon

inquiry is a conclusive proof, either of despair, or else of a profound mistake as to the method of salvation. When men once believed that there was gold to be found in Australia, the evidence of the reality of their faith was the vast emigration of men, ready to encounter all the difficulties of a long voyage over half the world to seek for it. The fact is, faith is at once a principle of rest and a principle of action. It is a planting into Christ, so that the root of our life is firmly at rest, whilst the branches are flung out to put forth new shoots, and to be nourished by the winds of heaven.

§ 29. It is not difficult to understand how *unbelief* would lead men to abandon inquiry. Inquiry is the enterprise of the mind, and enterprise will only be abandoned when men cease to believe in the possibility of success. Credulity may usurp the name of faith, and credulity is the most cowardly of all our mental attributes. In taking the name of faith, it masks itself under the name of the most courageous of human virtues. If men really believed that the salvation of the world was to be found in Christ, and really to believe it as an honest fact is itself a great triumph of faith; and if they believed that in the facts of the gospel are involved principles which, if brought out into deductive use in real life, would change the face of the world, nothing could hold them back from the search. If we only believed that God had still more light to break out of His holy Word, inquiry would be as free and earnest in religion as it is in

any department of physical science. It is our despair, not our faith, that keeps down inquiry. If, indeed, we had exhausted the gospel, if our importunity had wrung from it its last secret, we should have abundant reason to despair. But never would despair be so calamitous as in the present condition of the world. The great blind longing for salvation, as a present possibility, so vaguely trying to utter itself under the name of Progress, shows that hopes have been awakened in the human mind such as never existed before. If these were now balked, the result would be a deeper wretchedness than ever: "For the children are come to the birth, but there is no strength to bring forth." *

§ 30. So long as faith can keep its hold upon Christ it will be impossible altogether to suppress inquiry. Faith tells us that there are unused resources lying in the gospel, ready for the supply of our spiritual wants; and it beckons us on to explore the hidden treasure which God has so long, with tender reproaches of our dulness, been soliciting us to make our own. Nothing but our unbelief of Christ's saving power makes the salvation of the world appear so incredible. And so we learn to acquiesce in things as they are, and are willing to postpone Christ's salvation to some vague future, which no law of continuity connects with processes already at work. God has done His part. The gospel supper is prepared, and all things are now ready. But we cannot quite make

* Isa. xxxvii. 8.

up our mind that any such incredible bounty is really intended for our use, and that the Son of God has really said: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." *

§ 31. The relation between faith and inquiry is intimately connected with a problem which has often engaged the attention of mankind. It takes the form of an alternative question, Are we to believe in order to understand? or, Are we to understand in order to believe? †

§ 32. To those who accept the inductive principle, which teaches us to collect general truths from particular examples, the solution of the problem is found in the fact that the two orders of sequence do not form an alternative, but are a pair of processes mutually helpful to each other. Both are equally valid, and have their share in our intellectual progress, just as in walking we put our right foot before the left, and then the left before the right. And although, as a matter of fact, one or the other must have begun the long pilgrimage when on the nursery floor we first learnt to walk, it is practically of no consequence to our real progress to determine which of the two it was. Inquiry, when it comes first, helps faith;

* John vi. 51.

† St. Augustine made a near approach to the true solution when he said, "*Intellige ut credas verbum meum: sed crede ut intelligas verbum Dei.*"

and when faith comes first, it helps inquiry. It is an example of the old proverb—*Manus manum lavat*. In all experimental research this interchange of precedence is necessary. If, for example, we have no faith in the ability of a writer, we shall not care to take the trouble to understand what he has written ; and before we come to have faith in him we must examine what he has written, or trust to the reputation he has obtained. Accordingly we find Coleridge, in order to obtain for one of his works a fair reception at the hands of his readers, saying : “ Without a certain portion of gratuitous and (as it were) experimentative faith in a writer, a reader will scarcely give that degree of continued attention without which no didactic work, worth reading, can be read to any wise or profitable purpose.”*

§ 33. It is evident that something of this kind is needed in all cases. An author's reputation may beget a ready faith in the value of his works, and the experimental proof of their value justifies the faith. But after faith has been given, the author ought not to be put off with a faith which leaves his book unread, except in a case where we really have no practical interest in the matter. To take faith as a substitute for experience, in the matter of salvation, is to cheat ourselves, by the false use of a holy word, out of the very salvation to which faith is intended to lead. A faith that declines to enter upon the work of experimental inquiry is so

* “ Aids to Reflection,” preface, p. xviii.

far a "dead faith, being alone." Men who have ventured their all upon the experiment need not fear the result. Those who have no share in the venture, and who only look on, as spectators looked on at the conflicts of the arena, can scarcely understand the glow of inspiration which a true faith imparts as such a crisis of judgment and of trial is felt to be at hand.

SECTION 3.—INQUIRY IN ITS RELATION TO
SPONTANEOUS RELIGIOUS LIFE.

§ 34. There is still another view of the subject. To many minds the use of the intellect is a necessity of salvation. It furnishes the proper complement and balance to strong religious emotion. The ardour of pious zeal cannot (in most cases at least) be safely left to take its own course. The religious instinct, when strongly excited and exempt from the control of intellectual and moral principle, is liable to become sentimental, impulsive, sanctimonious, uncandid, jealous, untruthful, fanatical, bigoted, and cruel. No part of our nature stands in greater need of the regenerating influence of Divine grace than this. Men may have a zeal for God which is not according to knowledge. In such cases, nothing is more dangerous than for religious feeling to be abandoned to the guidance of taste and instinctive impulse. The greatest crimes have been committed by men who thought they were doing God service. The whole history of religion serves to

show how unsafe it is for the mind to be left under the blind guidance of such a mighty force. "So essential is knowledge, if not to virtue," says Dr. T. Brown, "at least to all the ends of virtue, that, without it, benevolence itself, when accompanied with power, may be as destructive and desolating as tyranny; and, notwithstanding the great principle of progression in human affairs, the whole native vigour of a state may be kept down for ages, and the comfort and prosperity and active industry of existing millions be blasted, by regulations which, in the intention of their generous projectors, were to stimulate those very energies which they repressed, and to relieve that very misery which they rendered irremediable."* So that, however important zeal and honesty of purpose may be in religion, they need determinate principles of regulation to work out their proper results.

§ 35. Unreasoning piety when produced by the Holy Spirit has often triumphed over all intellectual deficiencies, and has exhibited to the world some of the most beautiful examples of happy childlike Christian virtue. And if the spirit of martyrdom were the highest form of loyalty to Christ, it is among this class that His most heroic witnesses would be found. But, with many persons, intellectual activity is literally the alternative of a morbid condition of spiritual life. To such men, prayer (so far forth as it is an intellectual and systematic

* "Lectures on the Philosophy of Mind," p. 4.

exercise) is identical with the search for truth. To forbid inquiry would, in their case, be tantamount to forbidding them to pray except by set form. To pronounce private inquiry to be sinful, would be the same as to pronounce private prayer to be sinful. Our Lord's words in the Sermon on the Mount—"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"—would lose all their wonderful meaning. To thrust back the importunity of inquiry, would be nothing less than thrusting back the soul in its endeavour to meet the promise, "Then shall ye find me, when ye seek me with all your heart." Who will thus dare to incur the guilt of detaining the spirit from seeking the Father of spirits? The search may involve much labour, and may require all the aid that can be derived from the wisdom and experience of holy teachers, and from scientific method; but it is worth all it may cost. "Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox."*

§ 36. There is a very wide distinction (often overlooked) between the simple experience of the Christian life as a Divine gift and the experience which is derived from the intellectual interpretation of the Christian facts. The spiritual indwelling of Christ in the soul, by the life-giving power of the Holy Ghost, is a far higher thing than the exercise of our mental faculties in trying to understand the true meaning of the things of Christ. But these

* Prov. xiv. 4.

two experiences belong to different and even incommensurable spheres of things, and there can be no antagonism between them. The one is Divine and the other human. In spiritual, no less than in natural things, there is a true sphere for human activity, however inferior it may be to the sphere of the Divine efficiency. Because the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment, we are not called upon to decline to do our part in the nourishment and preservation of our being.

§ 37. If, now, the question is again repeated : Is Christian inquiry sinful ? the answer is : Inquiry is not sinful in itself. It is only sinful when it is sinful conducted. It is sinful when it violates the ethical conditions of inquiry. To have a mind and use it, cannot be a sin. The sin is far more likely to lie on the other side, in having a mind and declining to use it. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews reproves men's negligence in this matter. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God ; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness : for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection ; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works

and faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit.”*

§ 38. Freedom of inquiry, like all other freedom, consists, not in the repudiation of law, but in escape from all those mischievous conditions which hinder our voluntary surrender to the true laws of our intellectual nature. Inquiry has its determinate laws, and it is free only as it is permitted to accept those laws, and to proceed in accordance with their requirements. “A great deal of invective,” says Mr. Bailey, “has been levelled at free-thinking. Taking the expression literally, as applying to the process of thought, the only distinction worth attending to on this point is that between accurate and inaccurate, true and false. Thinking can never be too free, provided it is just. But, construing the phrase as synonymous with free inquiry, it follows, from the clearest principles of morality, that the freest inquiry is not only an innocent act, but under certain circumstances becomes an imperative duty.”†

* Heb. v. 12-14, vi. 1-8.

† Bailey, “The Pursuit of Truth,” p. 45.

CHAPTER IV.

HOPE ESSENTIAL TO INDUCTIVE INQUIRY.

§ 1. IN the foregoing pages I have attempted to show that thought is amenable to moral regulation, and that inductive inquiry is consistent with the most earnest faith in Christ. I now pass on to consider the ethical relation of Christianity to some of our feelings and emotions, so far as they bear upon the progress of Christian inquiry; and I begin with Hope.

§ 2. Inductive inquiry is essentially progressive. It is ever reaching forward to fresh truth, or rather to fresh knowledge of truth. It is an advance from particular facts to general principles, an advance from the known to the unknown. To sustain such a progressive movement, hope of success is an essential condition. Now hope is a distinctively Christian virtue,* and the question is, Does Christianity sanction the hope of progress in the cultivation of Christian theology?

§ 3. This question has been almost universally met with a direct and indignant denial, as if the

* "The tendency to look not to the past, but to the future, for types of perfection, was brought into the world by Christianity. Ancient literature gives few or no hints of a belief that the progress of society is necessarily from worse to better."—Maine's "Ancient Law," p. 74.

very suggestion of the possibility of a progressive theology were an impeachment of Christianity as a perfect Divine revelation. Men have asked, What room can there be for progress in Divine knowledge? Have we not the Truth already? Has not God given us a definite revelation respecting the way of salvation? To expect improvement in theology, as we do in natural science, is to imply imperfection in God's greatest gift to men. All that we have to do is to keep the faith which was once delivered to the saints, and to hand it down without either addition or loss to those who shall follow us. And the duty of the new generation is a docile reception of the transmitted inheritance.*

§ 4. All this would be discouraging enough to the inductive inquirer, if the reality and perfection of the Divine gift necessarily implied an equal reality and perfection in our intellectual appropriation of it. But there is often a very long interval between the two. The material creation, which God pronounced to be very good in the beginning,

* How this question enters into practical life, will appear from the two following extracts from an ecclesiastical debate which took place in the House of Commons on 9th of May, 1871. "The hon. member for Bradford had said that science was liberal, and that religion ought to be progressive also. His reply was that science was progressive, but that theology was in its nature stationary, and that the relations of man to God remained now as they did 6,000 years ago."—Mr. Bruce. "As to the relative progress in science and religion, there was no analogy between the two. They did not make new discoveries in theology, and the great probability was that the tendency of such progress would rather be to destroy what was supposed to be the scientific theology of past times than to make a more scientific theology for the future."—Sir Roundell Palmer.

is not the less perfect because it has taken so many weary ages for true ideas of its constitution to have become apparent to a few choice men of the race; and still more, before those ideas have found universal acceptance among mankind. The gospel of Christ contains principles which are waiting to come into operation as soon as we are prepared to apply them in actual life, and it is impossible to exaggerate the saving power of the Redeemer of the world, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. But if our present attainments had exhausted the possibilities of discovery as to this hidden wisdom, and if we could no longer "grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" because the utmost limit of knowledge had been already reached, then it would be our duty to accept the counsel of despair, in accepting a stagnant theology.

§ 5. Moreover, it is to be borne in mind that physical science itself was formerly supposed to be as perfect as theological science is regarded now; and a hopeless feeling, like that referred to above, had to be conquered before it could take its departure upon that splendid career of discovery which it has since pursued, and which seems never likely again to be arrested. It was difficult to make men believe that there was any new truth to be learned from the facts with which they were as familiar as with their own right hand. That so many men, of good capacity, having minds equal to our own, should have been living in the

world for so many ages, and not by this time have learned all that there was to learn, appeared so unlikely, and, therefore, so unreasonable, that he must be both a very irrational and a very presumptuous man who should hope to do more than gather up the gleanings of a field which had already been cleared of its harvest. When Columbus appeared before the Junta of Salamanca, to give reasons for his hope of finding a new world in the West, many of the learned and pious persons who heard his statements were shocked at the presumption and irreverence of the man. They seem to have entrenched themselves behind the one fixed position, that after so many profound philosophers and cosmographers had been studying the form of the world, and so many able navigators had been sailing about it, for several thousand years, it was a great presumption in an ordinary man to suppose that there remained such a vast discovery for him to make.* The influence of the discovery, when it was actually made, upon the mind of Europe, may be traced in the new hope which it produced, and in the courage which it gave to other inquirers, in all other departments of science, to venture beyond the old limits, and to suspect the claims of authority to restrain

* Irving's "Columbus," vol. i. p. 120. Bacon says of the advocates of authority that they are not satisfied with confessing their own failure, "but consider everything which has been either unknown or unattained by themselves or their teachers as beyond the limits of possibility; and thus, with most consummate pride and envy, convert the defects of their own discoveries into a calumny on nature and a source of despair to every one else."—"Novum Organum," book i. aph. 75.

inquiry. This is distinctly seen in the case of Copernicus,* and, through him, it spread to those who speedily followed in the path of discovery.

§ 6. But the mass of mankind refuse to accept the unverified religious anticipations of earnest men. They deem it more modest and humble to cling to the past; and they, accordingly, settle down into a state of uncomplaining repose.† They are able to give good reasons for their restful condition. "It is our lot," they say, "and to resist it is to rebel against the Divine order. To bring such hopes before us is to be resented as a temptation to discontent with the limitations of Providence. Why should we wish to cure evils which are incurable? or which ought not to be looked upon as evils at all? And as to discoveries, is it not a fact that we come into the world too late to find anything new? Nay, is not devout reason itself against such a hope? Is it likely that God would have allowed any of His great gifts to man to lie concealed and wasted for so long a time,

* "C'était aussi l'époque de la découverte de l'Amerique. Le nom de Christophe Colomb retentissait en Europe. . . . Le triomphe de Colomb était un grand encouragement pour les génies investigateurs. Kopernik, guidé par sa vocation, . . . encouragé par l'exemple de Christophe Colomb, poursuivait ses recherches astronomiques, non pas en aveugle disciple qui adopte, sans examen, les doctrines de ses prédécesseurs, mais en juge sévère, capable de reconnaître l'erreur, capable de se frayer une route nouvelle."—"Kopernik et ses Travaux," par Jean Czynski, p. 81.

† "Nothing is more certain than that despair has almost the same effect upon us with enjoyment, and that we are no sooner acquainted with the impossibility of satisfying any desire, than the desire itself vanishes."—Hume's "Treatise on Human Nature," introduction, p. x.

whilst men were perishing for need of them? We have our portion. Why should we cry for the moon, like spoilt children? We cannot, with all our endeavours, make wings grow out of our shoulders, and learn to fly in the air. Or, take the worst—why should the caged lion (if that is our case) wound himself against the iron bars which shut him in? Is it not better to regard the evils of our lot as unimportant, or unavoidable, or normal, and to acquiesce in them? Is it not better to be contented with a peaceful, torpid, stagnant, prayerless existence? to take life as we find it, and try to sleep off, as well as we can, the great strange longings of the heart? ”

§ 7. Although such words may have the semblance of resignation and humility, they are not less really the language of despair. They reveal a mind out of sympathy with Christ and the great work He came to accomplish, in the setting up of a kingdom of God upon earth. We owe it to Him as the Saviour of the world not to despair of success in our search after His saving truth. To abandon inquiry under the idea, not that it is unlawful, but that it is hopeless, is to resign ourselves to a condition of moral blamelessness, and to throw the fault of our condition upon external circumstances, instead of condemning ourselves and justifying God.

§ 8. At the same time it must be granted that there is nothing that deserves to be more fiercely resented by us than the awakening of the mind

from its quiet sleep, by the mockery of a false hope in the matter of salvation. There is no greater misery than the cruel disappointment of high spiritual anticipation. The man who secures our confidence and beckons us on, in a believing trust, towards the light of a brighter day, only to quench that light as we rise towards it, and so to leave us in a blacker darkness than before, deserves the execration of all the best minds. It would have been better for us never to have caught the vision of such a salvation as that which is preached to us in the gospel, than, having seen it, to feel that it is but an unreal and transient dream, never to be fulfilled. It was because St. Paul had so vividly realised the conception of what our nature might become, by the renewing influence of Divine grace, that he could utter those agonizing words: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."*

§ 9. It is not altogether matter of surprise, therefore, that the resentment of mankind should always have been peculiarly severe against those who have been the first to announce the coming of a better future. There have been martyrs of hope,

* 1 Cor. xv. 10. I may here call attention to the fact that the magnificent argument respecting the resurrection of the dead contained in this chapter is strictly inductive. The resurrection of Christ is regarded by St. Paul as a (so-called) prerogative instance which, when generalized, warrants the inductive leap that we shall rise too. "Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming." "And if Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." This satisfies the definition, that induction is the process by which we conclude that what is true of a certain individual of a class is true of the whole class.

as well as martyrs of faith. They have had to prove the reality of their conviction, not so much by bodily suffering, as by the endurance of the ridicule or the pity of men. This is the penalty exacted for disturbing the quiet despair of the world. Sometimes, when the matter has been deemed serious, and has appeared to unsettle the existing state of religious conviction, persecution has taken the place of ridicule. It was thus with St. Paul. "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come."* So little did the Jews recognise, in what the apostle made known to them, that very hope which was the fulfilment of the great promise of God to their people, that they blindly tried to suppress it by putting him to death. It has been said that the persecutors of St. Paul were right, and that persecution is the ordeal through which even Christianity itself ought to pass. If such is the case, we must bear the trial, but not abandon the hope.

§ 10. But ridicule is the common instrument which hope has to encounter. There is nothing which we are more ready to be laughed out of, and nothing which requires more moral courage to maintain against the world's mockery, than the hopes which are not sanctioned by the venerated teachers and leaders of human thought. The multitude are ready

* Acts xxvi. 6, 7.

to take the cue from their superiors, as when the urchins of Salamanca touched their foreheads as Columbus passed them in the street. It is the nature of hope to transcend present experience. "We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?"* On this account hope can never vindicate itself by actual demonstration till it is accomplished, and then it ceases to be hope. And so we are often tempted to suppress our highest anticipations, as if it were almost sinful, or, if not sinful, yet foolish and quixotic, to let our thoughts take any definite shape, differing greatly from the standard of expectation which prevails around us. We can bear persecution better than ridicule. It is probable that many a real discovery has perished amidst the moral alarm which its earliest glimpse has created in the mind. Although we are quite sure that the progress of salvation must, of necessity, involve great changes in our mental combinations and ideas, yet we are afraid to let our thoughts take the form of definite possibility, even under the guidance of inspired teaching. There is no Christian virtue that has had so hard a struggle to maintain its existence, and grow, according to its predestined pattern, into forms of beauty and fruitfulness, as hope. Sin and death have only been able to keep their empire over us by means of our despair.

§ 11. But when once we are convinced that the hope of salvation rests upon a solid basis; when we

* Rom. viii. 24.

are satisfied that every fact of the gospel is the expression, under earthly conditions, of some principle of saving truth which is ready to reveal itself to prayerful inquiry, and which, when once discovered, is capable of being reproduced in our own life ; and when we are really (and not simply as a matter of sentiment) convinced that, in our knowledge of Christ, we are in the position that Newton described himself to be, in regard to physical research, " like a boy playing on the seashore, diverting himself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lies all undiscovered before him ; " * when such a state of mind arises, the spirit of inquiry will become habitual, and the science of salvation will advance. With the awakened feeling of such a new and accepted hope, the most desponding of men will start up from their repose, and will be ready to throw themselves (perhaps too hurriedly) upon the line of search. Then no assertion of the wisdom of our ancestors, no argument addressed to modesty (*argumentum ad verecundiam*), no shame of possible failure, will have power to keep down the swelling aspiration which moves them into activity. It is nothing but despair that protects and perpetuates many of the pious idolatries of the human mind. In an atmosphere of despondency there is no possibility of improvement ; and the awakening of fresh hope, by giving free exercise to mental activity, is the first pledge and condition of amendment.

* Brewster's " Life of Newton," vol. ii. p. 331.

§ 12. It has been said that "God forgives us all but our despair." Even our past errors may be converted into a ground of hope for the future. Suppose there had been in the past an exhaustive use of Christ; suppose we had employed a true scientific method in the investigation of the facts of the gospel; suppose we had used up all our reserves of strength; suppose the total receptivity of our nature had been fully tried; then, indeed, we should have reason to despair of the future of the world. But if past failure is not due to any of these causes; if the fault lies in ourselves, in our ignorance and neglect of the resources which God has given to us, then there is room for fresh hope. "Then," to employ the argument of Demosthenes, addressed to the Athenians, as applied by Lord Bacon to scientific inquiry, "from the consideration of the errors of the past we may draw hope for the future. That which is worst in the events of the past, is best as a ground of trust for the future. For if you had done all that became you, and still had been in this condition, your case might be desperate; but since your failure is the result of your own mistakes, there is hope that, correcting the error of your course, you may reach a prosperity yet unknown to you."*

§ 13. Any progress which may be anticipated by

*Bacon's "Novum Organum," bk. i. aph. 64. I find myself following the common mistake, now too deeply rooted to be put aside, of speaking of Lord Bacon. Bacon was raised to the peerage, first as Baron of Verulam, and then as Viscount of St. Albans. To call him Lord Bacon, is much the same as to speak of the present premier as Lord D'Israeli.

the use of the inductive method does not lie in the direction of the metaphysical problems of the scholastic theology. We can hope to add little, if anything, to the accumulated wealth of human thought which has been lavished upon such subjects. We have to deal with the actual questions of human sin and misery as seen in real life ; and it is from the unused resources lying in the gospel, it may even be from neglected facts from which nothing has been expected in the construction of theological science, that our hope must come. No one need suppose that he will be enabled by the inductive method to clear up all the unsolved problems of philosophy. We walk familiarly upon the earth without perceiving the light which it reflects, and which to the inhabitants of other worlds makes it appear a shining luminary ; so it may be with the facts of the gospel to us in our present mental attitude. Our very familiarity with them may cause us to miss that glory which is seen to belong to them by beings of another sphere.

§ 14. There are many who really wish for true guidance, if they could only get it, on questions of social urgency. "The apparent contradiction between the vast amount of unrelieved misery and the vast amount of energetic benevolence now existing in our country, which strikes many with despair, inspires us on the contrary with the most sanguine hopes ; because in that benevolence we see ample means of remedying nearly all our evils — means hitherto impotent and unavailing, solely

because misapplied. There is now, more than ever before, an adequate knowledge of the ills which are to be battled with and conquered; there is energy without stint or limit waiting, panting to be let loose upon it; there are agents without number only anxious to be shown how they can do good, without at the same time doing a more than counterbalancing amount of evil—sometimes, alas! not waiting for guidance; and there is money ready to flow in the most liberal abundance for the furtherance of any scheme which promises to relieve want or to assist exertion. All that is needed is the wisdom to direct this vast machinery for good, and a strong conviction on the part of the public that unless it can be placed under the guidance of sound principle it must be mischievous and not beneficent. This great lesson is now beginning to be learnt.”*

§ 15. The hopeful view of what may be made of human nature, when faith gives it entirely into Christ’s hands, furnishes the great motive to earnest Christian inquiry. We certainly have not yet exhausted the possibilities of salvation—either individual or social—just because we have not yet exhausted the fulness of Christ’s grace. The hope of Christian humanity which dedicated St. Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians, transcends anything we have yet reached, and gives so wide an horizon to our outlook, that we need not fear we shall hope too much. “I bow my knees unto the Father of

* “Essays on Political and Social Science,” by W. R. Greg, vol. i. p. 462.

our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." * The object of this hope is Christ. Till we lean more fully upon Him, we shall not find out how strong He is. "There must," says Montaigne, "be more vigour and strength in the bearer than in the burden. He who has not lifted as much as he can, leaves you to guess that he has still strength beyond that, and that he has not been tried to the utmost of what he is able to do. He who sinks under his load makes a discovery of his best, and the weakness of his shoulders." †

* Eph. iii. 14-19.

† Montaigne's Essays, vol. iii. p. 21.

CHAPTER V.

OF INTELLECTUAL REPENTANCE.

§ 1. WE have now seen that inductive inquiry is essentially progressive, and that hope is a necessary condition of its prosecution ; because where there is no hope of improvement there is no motive for endeavour. Despair takes away, first, the chance of progress, and then the wish for it, and the result is a submission to the existing state of things as natural and inevitable.

§ 2. We have now to observe that much more than hope is involved in a right moral attitude towards the Saviour. When Christ undertook the work of redemption He viewed us as sinners, responsible for our own miserable condition, and not as the victims of some dire calamity which it was impossible to avoid. It is due to Him that we should accept this estimate of our character, and meet Him in the spirit of repentance. This He is represented as requiring when He first opened His public ministry, as related by St. Mark. " And after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand : repent ye and believe the gospel." It is

not likely that we shall try to mend our ways unless we begin by admitting that they are capable of amendment. This being once conceded, the nature of repentance, in regard to our intellectual behaviour towards Christ, becomes a subject of extreme interest.

§ 3. The very idea of repentance supposes that we clear God and take the blame of past error upon ourselves. Or, in other words, repentance assumes that mankind have all along possessed the necessary faculties and natural conditions for the acquisition of truth; and that the failure to attain it has been due to moral causes—to some want of diligence, self-control, love of truth, humility, decision, or other moral quality in ourselves. The progress of human salvation involves an element of responsibility. We are therefore able to interfere with that progress, and to throw it back for long years by our own folly and indolence. And then we have to find out our fault and correct it. Every such attempt at self-correction is an act of repentance.

SECTION 1.—RETURN TO THE ORIGINAL FACTS.

§ 4. The word commonly used in the New Testament for repentance (*μετάνοια*) signifies afterthought, or a change of mind produced by reflection, especially in our moral judgments.* It is in this sense,

* “*Μετανοεῖν* is, properly, to know *after*, as *προνοεῖν* to know *before*, and *μετάνοια* *afterknowledge*, as *πρόνοια* *foreknowledge*. . . . At its next step, *μετάνοια* signifies the change of mind consequent on this afterknowledge. . . . At its third, it is regret for the course pursued,

and not in that of "doing penance," that repentance is here spoken of as entering into the ethics of inquiry.* Every change of mind from wrong to right, in a moral agent, attended with a consciousness of personal responsibility, is repentance, whatever the act or habit may be that is changed. Our mental acts, as well as our physical acts, may be objects of repentance. Thought is mental action, and the right conduct of the mind, in deliberate thinking, is the most important sphere of our moral responsibility and self-correction, inasmuch as our outward life is regulated from within.

§ 5. It is not needful for our present purpose to consider the emotional element which generally enters very largely into repentance—the surprise, the grief, the self-reproach, the remorse, and then the joy which follows when, with a sense of Divine forgiveness, there opens a view of the new possibilities of the future. The great end of repentance is amendment; and the first thing needed, in order to produce a true repentance, is an adequate perception of the nature of the errors to be amended. The questions relating to the guilt of such errors, to the grief to be felt on account of them, and to the atonement to be made for them, can only be properly dealt with by us when we are able clearly to see the nature of the evil which we have to cor-

resulting from the change of mind consequent on this afterknowledge. . . . It is only after *μετάνοια* has been taken up into the uses of Scripture . . . that it comes predominantly to mean a change of mind, taking a *wiser* view of the past."—Trench's "Synonyms of New Testament," p. 247.

* See Appendix.

rect. To know the disease is half the cure ; and, in order to know it, we must, as much as possible, quiet our emotional excitement and look the evil in the face. If we weep too much, we shall find our tears blinding us just at the very moment when we want to see most clearly. "Make me to know my transgression and my sin," is one of the most important prayers we can take to God ; and, in waiting for the answer to our prayer, we have need to preserve our minds in a calm and receptive state.

§ 6. Intellectual repentance consists in the bringing of our principles and methods of thought into an increasing agreement with facts. Repentance must, therefore, be viewed as a habit rather than as a transient act—a constant disposition to profit by our past mistakes, errors, and omissions, and to take up with better ways. When this habit prevails, Method itself will improve, as successful inquiry advances ; just as tools improve with the advance of the art in which they are employed. If this fact were duly admitted, and were allowed to produce its full results in the conduct of Christian inquiry, there would be no need for great and spasmodic acts of repentance. The whole process would be pervaded by a silent and unobtrusive habit of self-correction. Great repentances may be needful where this habit of self-correction is neglected ; just as, in civil states, revolution is needed as a means of improvement only where constitutional government is denied. It is always

a terrible thing to have to go through the process of a sudden breaking up of our whole mental frame, disintegrating our ideas and reducing them to their most elemental condition, and casting them into new moulds.

§ 7. The single department of human conduct within the circle of which we are at present moving is limited to the inductive method of Christian inquiry and the ethical relations of our mind to the process. Within these limits Repentance, in the sense which has here been assigned to the word, occupies an important place. When we become conscious that our method of interpreting the gospel has been culpably wrong, it becomes our duty to go back to the original facts, and study them in the purer light we may have obtained from the Spirit of Christ.

§ 8. But let us understand what this means. Any return to the original facts of Christianity as existing in the life of Christ, can never, for us, be a return to the fresh and simple experience of the first disciples who witnessed the occurrence of them in real life, without attempting to give any theological interpretation of them. Nor can we ever recover our own child-thoughts of those facts, as they appeared to us in the written Gospels, or in the sacred seasons of the Church, before we had acquired from real life any comparative scale of human nature by which to understand their human value. It is no less true in regard to the facts of Christianity, than in regard to the facts of nature,

to use Bacon's words, "that no one has yet been found of so constant and severe a mind as to have determined and tasked himself utterly to abolish theories and common notions, and to apply his intellect altogether smooth and even to particulars anew." The poetry of fresh life can never come back to us, even when we are converted and as little children enter the kingdom of God. And I will venture to add that it is not desirable, even if it were possible; for the simple reason, that however beautiful poetry may be, it is not the richest good we receive out of the great transactions of our Lord's earthly life.

§ 9. We may, however, go through a mental experience which shall, in the best sense, resemble a recovery of childhood. We may, in thought, return and stand once more in presence of the recorded facts of our Lord's life. We may study them afresh, in the light of our acquired knowledge of the motives which influence human conduct, and which determine the course of human history. This we could not do when we were children. We were not then able to turn to account the lessons which are derived from the various fortunes and errors, both of thought and action, of hope and disappointment, which make up the weary history of the past. Our own mistakes and the mistakes of the Church do not shut the door to our return. We can go back and begin again our study of Christ, with our "senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

§ 10. It is in this way only that we can ever hope to redress the disadvantage we are under, in consequence of our getting further and further away, in point of time, from the historical beginning of our faith. There is a sense in which history always becomes clearer to those who live at a distance from the events which it records. It is by the study of those events, in the growing light of human intelligence, that we come to understand their true meaning, even better than the actors themselves. In a moral point of view we stand nearer to the facts than they did, in spite of the lapse of years.* In this way we find ourselves to be, not simply the distant links in a chain of succession which is ever lengthening out, but members of a spiritual corporation, in organic union with a common centre of humanity in our Lord's person, and interpreted by relation to it. The principle of faith in Christ secures this result. When we believe in him as the "Interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness," then "our flesh becomes fresher than a child's, and we return to the days of our youth." It is by faith in Christ that we quite recover all that it is needful we should recover of a childlike realisation of the past.

§ 11. Such a theological repentance, if it may

* Hume remarks that it is a very curious phenomenon that if belief in the facts of ancient history consisted in a certain vivacity produced by their original impression, it would decay by the length of the transition, and must at last be utterly extinguished.—Hume's *Philosophical Works*, vol. i. p. 194.

be so called, is a matter of extreme difficulty. None but those who have tried it can at all understand the risks and dangers which lie in the way of its attainment. To say nothing of the imperious claims of dogmatic authority (which would perhaps count such an attempt at self-correction a sin), there is the difficulty, even for the freest minds, of getting back to the original facts. The creative activity of the human mind has, during many centuries, accumulated vast stores of thought and reasoning upon the gospel narrative. The greater part of these products have never passed the test of practical verification. Some of them exist in the symbols and creeds of the Church, and a still greater number in the writings and controversies of theologians. The entire region of theology is covered over with the "old wastes," the "desolations of many generations." The traditions of men have been heaped, age after age, upon the foundation which God has laid in Zion, so that it has at length become a work of extreme difficulty to touch the living rock.

§ 12. Of all errors, those which are supported by a false theology have proved most unfavourable to the progress of human amelioration—as, for example, when men have appealed to the authority of the Bible for the practice of polygamy, the perpetuation of slavery, and the burning of witches. The correction of such errors is among the most difficult of accomplishment. Vices, which succeed in obtaining the sanction of custom and tradition,

are clung to as sacred things, which it would be wrong to give up. All idolatry partakes of this character. There is no form of repentance that has to encounter so hard a trial as this. Accordingly, it is just that part of repentance for which extraordinary help has been provided in the gospel. "Ye know," says St. Peter, "that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain [sterile] conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." * It is the costliness of the redemption-price that reveals to us the greatness of the evil to be remedied. The inheritance of such traditional conversation could never have been seen to be so evil, had a ransom less precious than the blood of Christ been given to reveal it. And yet how difficult it is for us to bring ourselves to part with so much of what we regard as spiritual wealth! It is on this account that the refuse of the past is allowed to accumulate, as too precious to be cleared away, till it becomes the greatest hindrance to our spiritual work. If we could only acquire such a delicacy of perception as would cause us to feel as evils things which were no evils to our fathers, and such an impatience under those traditions and habits of thought which they accepted and learned to like because they were sanctioned by ancient use, we should be ready to say, as Judah said, in the story of the restoration of

* 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

Jerusalem : "The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish ; so that we are not able to build the wall."*

SECTION 2.—ANALOGY OF PHYSICAL INQUIRY.

§ 13. And this is the place where we may introduce the great lesson which God has been teaching us in the revival of physical science in modern times. This lesson is itself a revelation, not uttered, as in ancient times, by the mouth of any single man, but given out by Divine providence as if the lips of Time had spoken. What was the secret of that wonderful movement? Was it not this simple fact, that if men would only just go back to the study of God's works of nature, they would not fail to obtain fresh knowledge of her laws, and unexpected command over her resources ; instead of being left, as the effect of their own indocility, to live upon their past poverty of experience and attainment? No new force had to be created, no new faculty to be bestowed upon the human mind. All that was required was an act of scientific repentance, so to speak ; a perception of past error, and of the true method of dealing with the existing materials of the world. At first, this requirement appeared to demand the abandonment of too much of what had become dear to men's minds, to be endurable. Old authorities and established sciences, around which the mental experiences of men had grown up, could not easily be abandoned without a sense of privation and loss, while as yet there was

* Neh. iv. 10.

nothing to supply the place of what was resigned. And yet the deed was done in a manner which reminds us of the conduct of the Hebrew patriarch. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." *

§ 14. "Man, the servant and interpreter of nature, performs and understands as much as he has collected concerning the order of nature by observation and reason, nor does his knowledge or his power extend further. This is the first aphorism of the "*Novum Organum*." Many persons, on reading it, have felt surprised that a great philosopher should have thought it necessary to write down so obvious a truth, as his starting-point for bringing about a reformation in the philosophy of the world. "Might not a child have written it?" it may be said. "What can be more simple than the rule, that if a man would interpret anything, he must first study it, and try to see it in its own light, and with his own eyes?" Just so; and if the world had always been wise enough to stick to this seemingly simple and obvious method of procedure, there would have been no need for the reform which Bacon sought to bring about. But men had forsaken nature for Aristotle and the Schools. And as the case actually stood, Bacon's work consisted in recalling the mind, after a long desolate interval of almost utter alienation and sterility, to its lost

* Heb. xi. 8.

simplicity of communion with the reality of things, and so to a new start in the progress of discovery. Such a return to facts was resisted as involving a sacrifice of precious traditions; but the result has proved that, whatever the sacrifice was, the gain has infinitely made up for it.

§ 15. If the history of physical science has for us any moral and propædæutic office, and is not limited to mere material advantage; if it has any uses of discipline, so that the same mind which is exercised in the pursuit of physical truth may carry its acquired experience of Method over to the study of the facts of the Gospel, then the analogy of instruction becomes of the highest value to us.* The mental process is the same in both cases. The order of development resembles that which is described by St. Paul: "That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual."† First, *Fiat experimentum in corpore vili*; and then it may be carried into the higher order. And among the first of its lessons is the duty of not permitting the dogmatic conclusions of the past to prevent us from seeking to penetrate more deeply than our fathers did into the things which God has given us in Christ. If so

* "The successful results of our experiments and reasonings in natural philosophy, and the incalculable advantages which experience, systematically consulted and dispassionately reasoned on, has conferred in matters purely physical, tend, of necessity, to impress something of the well weighed and progressive character of science on the more complicated conduct of our social and moral relations."—Herschel's "Intro. Nat. Philos." p. 72.

† Cor. xv. 16.

much good came to them from the fountain of living waters, why should not we also drink at the same source, instead of going to the cisterns which they prepared for our use? Is not God still saying to us, as He did to the Jews: "O generation, see ye the Word of the Lord. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?" *

§ 16. And another characteristic lesson furnished by physical inquiry, as now pursued, is its power of self-correction and progress. Such a habit, of course, implies a perpetual modification and change of doctrinal statement as knowledge advances. This only serves to show how great has been the triumph of objective truth over the subjective reason. Men have had humility enough to abandon ideas and conceptions which would not bear the test of severe verification. The result has been a continual advance, as contrasted with the mill-horse movement of the mind under the old method of learning. Formerly there was a perpetual round without progress. The same problems were continually offering themselves for fresh discussion, and nothing was definitely settled. But modern science has unconsciously caught the spirit of St. Paul, and is ready to adopt his language when he says: "I count not

* Jer ii. 81. At the Council of Trent, Richard du Mans, a Franciscan, is reported to have said that the scholastic divines had so well explained the doctrines of Christianity, that it was no longer necessary to take them from the inspired volume.

myself to have apprehended : but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* It is here, at this "mark," that all spiritual movement must at last find its end. No earthly thing, no material civilisation, no mere social improvement, no scientific attainment, has more than a typical value in the view of our highest life, or can be a substitute for it.

SECTION 3.—OF THE PRIESTLY FUNCTION.

§ 17. When men sin against light and knowledge, there is a witness within them condemning the evil which they do ; and so far, the scope of repentance is sufficiently apparent. But when they sin under the sanction of erroneous conceptions, without knowing that they are doing wrong, their repentance fails to reach its proper object, and the confession of sin, when destitute of a clear conception of law, is often exaggerated, and is always vague and indefinite. Conscience has not light enough to reveal the nature of the evil. There is darkness in the lighthouse, where of all places darkness ought not to be ; for "if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"† The universe is pervaded by spiritual laws ; but the conscience can only report their violation in proportion as it acquires delicacy of

* Phil. iii. 13, 14.

† Matt. vi. 23.

moral susceptibility ; and as the tenderness of conscience increases and the spirituality of the law reveals itself, the sense of sin. becomes more vivid, and the exercise of repentance more spiritual and intelligent. The question then arises,—Is there, in the Divine method of grace, any provision for the promotion of the spiritual illumination of the conscience? The answer to this question is of great interest.

§ 18. Conscience is the one thing which we cannot give up to our fellow-men. We may give them our love, our thoughts, our property ; but not our conscience. This we must reserve for God, for truth and righteousness. In conscience each man stands alone, but in intellect there is a community of interest. True knowledge results from the continuous thought of many contributing minds. All science partakes of this character. The science of theology is no exception to the rule. The truth acquired by one mind becomes the common property of the race. To discover truth is the office of special men. Elihu speaks of such leaders of thought when he says, “If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness : then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit : I have found a ransom.”* The ideal of such a man is given by the last of the Old Testament prophets. “The law of truth was in his mouth,

* Job xxxiii. 28.

and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." *

§ 19. Such men, if they are truly to fulfil their priestly office, have need to be very wise, as well as very good men. If they take false or defective views of the "law of truth," they may create artificial sins, and "teach for doctrines the commandments of men." True priests must be able to teach us what is not sin, as well as what is; or they will seek to impose their own morbid or fanatical views upon other men, and break their own hearts when they fail of success. Moreover, the attempts they make to bring about a reformation in the conduct of men and institutions, may, in proportion to their zeal, be the very means of inflicting greater evils upon mankind. The Flagellants, for example, in the time of the plague in the fourteenth century, professed to take upon themselves both the sins and the repentance of the people. They went about in large processions, with crosses and banners, scourging themselves, chanting litanies, and offering prayers and intercessions for the removal of the calamity. This was a very coarse function, and it is well known that their penance helped to spread the evil.

§ 20. There is another reason why those who

* Mal. ii. 6, 7.

take upon themselves such a priesthood of humanity should be the wisest of men. A very large part of the world's sin goes unrepented of and unconfessed from mere ignorance, rather than from conscious obduracy. Men often "know not what they do," when they sin most deeply. They seem, to themselves, to be obeying the most religious instincts of their nature, even when they are perpetrating the most frightful evils. Was it not under such an impulse that the Jewish leaders crucified the Lord of glory? Is it not the false conscience and the bad theology, rather than the personal vices and crimes of individual men, that have wrought so much mischief in the world? It becomes the function of those few men who are possessed of a peculiar sensibility and fineness of moral insight to discover the spiritual evils which have, in this way, been doing their bad work in society, not only undetected, but even cherished as great truths, sanctioned by the Church, and guarded as precious traditions, to be carefully handed down from generation to generation. Such men alone are able to detect, and to bear upon their hearts, the unconscious sins of the world. The greatest benefactors of mankind are, perhaps, not those who discover great truths which have been unknown before, but those who have succeeded in feeling, and in making others feel, the falseness of those cherished principles in which no one has before suspected the possibility of error. It is through the experience of such men that we learn the evil

of sins which would otherwise remain in all their bad dominion over human life, as if they were legitimate powers.

§ 21. This was the office which some of the ancient prophets performed on behalf of the Jewish people. To show "unto Jacob his transgression, and Israel his sin," was as much a part of their commission as to foretell future events. If any one will carefully read the ninth chapter of the book of Ezra and the first chapter of the book of Nehemiah, he will see this exemplified. In the book of Jeremiah also many illustrations of it occur. To take one of these,—he says to the Jews: "The Lord of hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke me to anger in offering incense unto Baal. *And the Lord hath given me knowledge of it, and I know it: then thou showedst me their doings.*" But the people saw no evil in offering incense to Baal, although it was breaking the prophet's heart. He could not conceal his knowledge, and so provoked their resentment. "But I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me, saying, Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered."* To them his sensibility of

* Jer. xi. 17-19.

conscience was morbid and offensive ; too eager to take upon itself and to charge upon them, sins, which to them were not sins at all. And so exasperated were they that they said to him, " Prophecy not in the name of the Lord, that thou die not by our hand." *

§ 22. There is, perhaps, no case in the Old Testament history that will serve so well to illustrate this priestly prerogative of the best minds as that of the prophet Daniel. It is not easy for us to enter into his experience, as it is recorded in his great confession of sin in the ninth chapter of his book ; but it is worth the attempt. It requires some common ground of sympathy and considerable energy of imagination for us to be able to put ourselves into the place of another, and to conceive what we have not gone through ourselves. Few, indeed, have been capable of such sorrow on account of the sins of others as that which is there delineated. It is not the patient upon whom the disease is doing its fatal work, but the physician who is free from the disease, that best understands its nature. Daniel knew more than any man among his people what the national sins were, because he was the holiest man among them. He took, therefore, their sins upon himself, and confessed them as if they were his own. There was nobody else capable of doing this, and he did it by a kind of vicarious function. It is in this confession of his that we learn that profound and funda-

* Jer. xi. 21.

mental principle in the ethics of inquiry which makes repentance the condition of knowledge. The principle is brought out in these words: "As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we *might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.*" *

§ 23. But the point will be altogether lost to us, unless we can look upon those iniquities which hinder the progressive knowledge of Divine truth, as the prophet saw them. By "iniquities," he meant the spiritual sins of the people, as well as their gross vices. The evils he deplored were felt to be sins only by a few of them: the religious conceptions which sanctioned the worship of Baal; the æsthetic forms which superseded the ritual of Moses; in a word, the self-will which "sought out many inventions" in religion, and withdrew men from the objective revelation of God—all this was looked upon by them as highly satisfactory. They were not consciously committing iniquity. The prophet alone understood the whole case. He saw that their ignorance and misery were caused by their departing from God, and following the devices of their own hearts. His standard of religion was God's law and covenant—their standard was their own religious taste. They liked to have their own way; and that was enough for them. His rule was higher than theirs: and so, what in his view was iniquity, in theirs was a meritorious religious service.

* Dan ix. 18.

§ 24. It is possible for us to reach such a state of spiritual sensibility as shall enable us to obtain a far deeper insight into the true nature of sin, than that which is felt in the ordinary experience of men. But all sin whatsoever has this peculiarity, it is a transgression of law. Iniquity is a departure from a rule or standard of truth. This is a strict definition of it. But whilst we accept this definition we must remember that there are two kinds of iniquity, very different from each other in regard to actual criminality. First, there is transgression of unknown law. Secondly, there is transgression of known law. In both cases suffering may result from transgression; ignorance is no security against penalty. The eternal principles of justice and morality can never be violated with impunity. But guilt or personal criminality is imputed to the transgression only when transgression is the conscious act of the will, or the result of habits voluntarily formed. But in both cases it is law, not consciousness—it is the objective standard, not the subjective emotion—that is the measure of iniquity, and determines its reality as a simple matter of fact. If conscience were the measure of iniquity (as it is of self-condemnation), then there would be no iniquity in unknown sin. But if law is the measure of iniquity, then conscience itself must learn to accept the verdict of law. “I was alive without the law once,” says St. Paul: “but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.”* The iniquities of men are, there-

* Rom. vii. 9.

fore, divided into two classes—the known and the unknown. Where the law is unknown, sin is not imputed as a personal crime. But the reality of the iniquity exists, notwithstanding; and the sufferings which result from it give notice that something is wrong—although conscience may have failed to report it. There may be iniquity, although there is no one to find it out; and there may be penalty, although no one has succeeded in tracing the penalty to a moral cause.

§ 25. To the mind of Daniel, the law of God was present, as it was not present to the minds of his countrymen. He saw iniquity where they did not. He was able to connect their calamities with moral causes, as they could not. It was in this way that the iniquity of his people filled him with so much shame and penitence; and it was this iniquity which was the great hindrance, so long as it was unrepented of, that in his view arrested their growth in the knowledge of God.

§ 26. This is one point in which the moral and intellectual relations of our mind to Divine truth are found to coincide. It is here that we can see how the process which discovers truth, or, in other words, the logic of induction, depends for its success upon ethical conditions. Error, intellectually considered, is, itself, the result of moral derangement; and the intellectual restoration cannot be effected without being preceded by a moral restoration. Those writers who insist upon “the absolute innocence of honest error,” can hardly

mean to say that there was no sin in the error which led to our Lord's crucifixion, to the martyrdom of Stephen, to the establishment of the Inquisition, to the burning of the witches in New England, to the slaughter of the Huguenots and other great crimes of the past. In all such cases the Divine law of human nature is broken, and to break that law is sin. Ignorance may mitigate the guilt, but cannot alter the essence of the sin.

SECTION 4.—CHRIST GIVING REPENTANCE.

§ 27. But if the prophets could thus in the spirit of Christ take upon themselves the sins of their own people, Christ does much more than this. St. John says: "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."* Christ alone is the perfect sin-bearer, because He alone knew sin thoroughly. The prophets were but types of Him. And what they were, they were by His Spirit dwelling in them. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." They could, consciously, do nothing more than carry that spirit into the conditions of their own age and people. But He took upon Him the sin of all times and all nations. In this there is no fiction of a transfer of remorse, or punishment, or pain. It was all reality to Him, He actually bore our sins, and they broke His heart. When the Psalmist, in the spirit of Christ, said, "Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law,"† he reveals to us

* 1 John ii. 2.

† Psa. cxix. 186.

how marvellous is the grief which one man can feel on account of other men's sins. And if there were not some one so to understand, and so to feel the sin, and so become the physician of the whole world, how could the world be healed of its sin, and how would it be possible to make any progress in the knowledge of salvation? If nobody had succeeded in getting to the depth of the disease, the world would be lost beyond redemption. This Christ has done.

§ 28. "The sin of the world" which He bore is one in principle, however diversified it may be in the forms of its manifestation.* "The law of sin," to use St. Paul's expression, has not only manifold, but even opposite modes of expression. In obedience to the same law, smoke rises in the air, cork floats on the surface of water, and lead sinks to the bottom. In like manner the law of sin may reveal itself in the self-righteousness of the Pharisee, in the zeal of the persecutor, and in the extortion of the publican. Principles are revealed in small events as well as in the most striking phenomena. The eating of the forbidden fruit served to reveal

* Luther condemns "that laborious and useless method of confession, or rather of despair, by which we have been hitherto taught to number the sand; that is, to discuss, collect, and measure our sins in detail, in order to produce contrition." He says, "Where there is contrition for one sin there will be contrition for all, . . . and so our sins ought rather to be considered in the wounded Christ than in our conscience. For there they are dead, here they live."—"Present Day Papers," vol. ii. p. 43.

"No repentance is true save that which begins from love of justice and of God; and what those confessors make the end and consummation of repentance is rather its beginning."—*Ibid.* p. 44.

the law of sin, just as the falling of an apple serves to exemplify the law of gravitation. Christ saw this law of sin perfectly. No one else ever knew, as He did, "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," and all the forms in which its evil was ready to reveal itself in human life. The Physician of souls, Himself free from sin, best understands its nature and its cure. And, therefore, "now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."* No one but He could adequately understand the true nature of sin, and, so to speak, cast it away for ever from Himself and us, as the abominable thing which God hates. To understand, it is one of the conditions of being able to bear it, in any intellectual and spiritual sense. To feel remorse, or punishment, or pain, is one thing; but to feel the sinfulness of sin is another. If we would repent of sin, it is needful that we should learn to see sin in the light in which our Lord saw it.

§ 29. No one of us, in seeking to interpret the sacrifice of Christ, ought to limit his view of it to the present condition of his own experience or to the present degree of his own spiritual sensibility. Christ died not only for the sins which are present to our consciousness, but also for the sins which do not appear sinful to us yet. If we could only see sin as He saw it, we should be amazed at the holy names by which we have been sanctifying bad principles that have been working disaster in the

* Heb. ix. 26.

world. As the true meaning of Christ crucified grows upon the mind, it never fails to create a new consciousness of sin, and, with it, a deeper repentance. A great sacrifice of blood, flowing from the heart which was broken by our sins, may appear, to impenitent men, an inexplicable mystery. But as the consciousness of sin grows upon us, nothing less than such a sacrifice can give peace to the mind.

“ All my depths to Thee are known,
Thou hast made them all Thine own :
This is what can comfort me,
Sins and griefs were borne by Thee.

“ I will wash me with Thy tears,
I will ease me with Thy fears ;
Take Thy bleeding thorns and pain,
Put them to my wounds again.”

§ 30. There is a distinction between conscience and will. Free will is essential to the existence of sin. Acts which are not the result of our own choice are not free, and, therefore, cannot be called sins, even though they are contrary to the law of God. But sin may exist as a voluntary act when there is no actual consciousness of law, and therefore no feeling of self-condemnation. But long after the deed is done fresh light may break upon the mind, and then the conscience will awake to a sense of sin. The act was voluntarily done, but done in ignorance of its sinfulness, and so it was a voluntary transgression of the Divine law, not present to the mind. The awakening of such a consciousness was one of the characteristics

of St. Paul's conversion. He says, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. I persecuted the church. . . I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." * In this way we see that not only the acknowledged necessities of our human conscience are met by Christianity, but what is far more, the necessities which are not even felt by us.

§ 31. It is a great joy to think that in the Cross of Christ we have the true measure by which to estimate both the evil of sin, and the fulness of its forgiveness. Down to the very depth of our fall, far beyond the range of our conscious experience, Christ has met the evil and has conquered it. And if our consciousness were to grow, in fineness of spiritual perception, to such an extent as to enable us to see sin as God sees it, still our experience could never go beyond Christ's saving power. "His blood cleanseth us from all sin," and not from those sins only which we have learnt already to feel and confess. The possibilities of conviction do not exceed the efficacy of His sacrifice.

§ 32. But in this place we have only to do with the bearing of repentance upon the inductive method of Christian inquiry, and only so far with the doctrine of the atonement. The Cross of Christ, by awakening in the mind a sense of guilty error, becomes a powerful instrument for the discovery of truth. The crucifixion was, to a great

* 1 Tim. i. 13.

extent, the result of the false theology of the Jewish elders. "They fell into the too common error of letting one text blot out a thousand; of dwelling on favourite dogmas, and misinterpreting passages, till the wide fields of Scripture truth were narrowed to the limits of their prejudiced and partial zeal. . . There can be little doubt that the Jewish leaders believed themselves to be acting under the authority of that command in Deuteronomy, which enjoins that they should slay the prophet who came to them with signs and wonders, in case he tempted them to "go after other gods." . . . It was biased zeal for a literal, isolated, and faithless interpretation, which made them set the special against the general revelation, and persuade themselves that Christ was teaching a new Divinity, "because he made himself the Son of God." But no sooner was the crime committed, than the conviction arose that the interpretation of Scripture under which they had acted was a false interpretation, and from that moment a new organ of inquiry was furnished to the human mind. The Cross of the Son of God gave a new meaning to repentance, and a new logic to discovery. By it the traditional method of interpreting the Scripture was disturbed, and the old Testament began to appear to men's minds to have meanings that differed widely from those which were invented by the scribes and the Pharisees. The old errors were abandoned and new truths took their place. It was at the Cross that

* Hannal's Bampton Lecture for 1868, p. 247.

men learnt, and may still learn, to forsake their mental iniquities, and to understand God's truth. We are not now at liberty to conduct inquiry, as though the Cross of Christ had never been introduced into human history. The very fact of the existence of that Cross imposes intellectual obligations, and opens possibilities, which did not exist before.

CHAPTER VI.

OF INTELLECTUAL SACRIFICE.

§ 1. IN the foregoing chapter, I have endeavoured to point out the use of intellectual repentance in promoting the success of Christian inquiry. A habit of self-correction, applied to our intellectual conduct, must tend to free us from our conscious errors. But there is one great difficulty in the way of the use of this remedy. It is that of finding out which of our beliefs are wrong, and which are right. All believers, however opposite their views, are quite persuaded that there is not one of their opinions which they would not willingly give up, if they could only once be convinced that it was wrong. This, they feel, would be a positive duty. But they also feel that it is no less a duty to hold fast what they believe to be true, although it may turn out, after all, that they are mistaken in thinking it to be so. The difficulty therefore is, to find out a method of dealing with our convictions in such a way that, even whilst we hold them to be true, and cherish them with an earnestness of devotion which would lead us to die for them rather than renounce them at the bidding of any human authority, they may yet be prevented from interfering with the

progress of inquiry. The solution of this problem would be of the greatest benefit to mankind.

§ 2. If then there is, in Christianity, any principle which will aid us in this great intellectual difficulty, and which will do for us, in our need, what mere repentance shows itself powerless to do, it is of great importance to the progress of the knowledge of salvation that we should bring it into use, as one of the instruments of a true method of inquiry. Such an instrument is, I think, to be found in the spirit of self-sacrifice, if only we can give it entrance into the circle of our intellectual activity, as we already do, so extensively, into the circle of our affections, of our appetites, and of our material possessions.

SECTION 1.—OF THE NATURE OF INTELLECTUAL SACRIFICE.

§ 3. A great difference is at once apparent between Repentance and Sacrifice, when viewed in relation to our intellectual conduct. Both deal with what may be called our own mental products; and, so far, they are alike. But in Repentance we renounce as error what we actually discover to be wrong; whilst in Sacrifice we offer to God those products of our mind which we believe to be true, which have cost us most of thought and prayer to produce; and which we deem most acceptable to Him, as the fruit of His own grace, and as approaching most nearly to the thoughts and ideas of His own mind. Under the Mosaic

covenant a distinction was made between wild beasts, and animals upon the rearing of which human care was bestowed, and which served for the most wholesome food of man; and it was the last alone that were permitted to be offered in sacrifice to God. And this applies in its highest form to our spiritual offerings. To speak of bringing our acknowledged iniquities and errors as a sacrifice to God, is as foreign to the true conception of sacrifice as it would have been for the Jewish priest to have brought unclean animals to the altar of the temple. Lions and bears and birds of prey, wherever found, were liable to be killed, without any religious ceremony, as creatures injurious to man. God did not ask for them as an offering from His people. The sacrifices which He required were doves, lambs, young bullocks, and other animals, the most beautiful and free from blemish. Notwithstanding the seeming waste and cruelty of these sacrifices, it was, in reality, the most noble use to which such beautiful creatures could be devoted. And the lesson we learn from it, in regard to the conduct of our intellectual life, is that we should ever be ready to yield up to God the best of our mental products. It may not be easy for us to fulfil the conditions of such spiritual sacrifice. It may seem to cost us too dear, and it may be hard to understand the principles upon which the sacrifice proceeds. But when once the "law of the house" is discovered, and our offering is duly "salted with fire," our convictions are no

longer our own, but are held subject to the conditions of the Divine truth. I limit these expressions to those convictions which are the result of inductive inference. Within these limits the major premise, which may have cost us years of labour to construct, will henceforth be looked upon as provisional, and liable to be given up at the call of God. And in this one fact lies the value of sacrifice as an instrument of intellectual advancement.

§ 4. For what is meant by the sacrifice of our convictions to God? Is it not (when once we get inside the imagery by which it is expressed) a readiness to yield our subjective views to the supremacy of Truth? Is it not a readiness to abandon our mental conclusions, however dear they may be to us, when Reality requires it of us? Is it not, in the investigation of truth, to submit to Facts rather than to human authority, our own or that of the Church? This is the truest sacrifice of the mind, and the most valuable means of progress.* If what we regard as a truth should, after all, be only a half-truth, or a truth which has, in the course of its development, to undergo change in the form of its expression—like the metamorphoses of organic life—we are saved, by the spirit of sacrifice, from stopping short of the

* "Does not the man of science who accepts, with true manly reverence, the facts of Nature in the face of venerated traditions, offer a more acceptable service than he who repeats the formula and copies the gestures derived from the language and customs of despots?"—"Mechanism in Thought and Morals," by O. W. Holmes, p. 114.

true issue of inquiry, and from resting in a false finality. So long as this spirit rules us, we shall be able to keep the mind open to the light, as it grows more and more into the perfect day. Our mental wealth, however legitimately obtained, may, if we are unwilling to "sell all that we have," as effectually hinder our following the Saviour, as did the material wealth of the young man in the Gospel, who went away sorrowful because he was very rich.*

§ 5. But it is of extreme importance to observe that what we give in sacrifice to God must in some true sense be our own. In the Jewish ritual "the most important consideration was this, that the offering presented should be the property of the person presenting it. Every kind of property was to be excluded which had not been acquired by the worshipper himself in the sweat of his face, that is, by his own diligence and toil. But wine, oil, corn, and cattle, were not merely the result of *his* toil and care, they were also and chiefly the fruit of the blessing of God, a gift of God."† When the prophet Hosea uses the very bold imagery of rendering to God "the calves of our lips," he leads us to think of the richest results of intellectual labour and of spiritual activity, brought out into the actual expression of human language. These we may bring in sacrifice to God, not because we regard them as faulty, but on the contrary, be-

* Luke xviii. 23.

† Kurtz on the Sacrificial Worship of the Old Testament, p. 60.

cause we have nothing more free from blemish to bring.”*

§ 6. It is needful to be on our guard against the misleading use of holy words. We may call our Christian science by the name of Divinity or Sacred Theology, and then attribute to it a character of changelessness and perfection which excludes all idea of progress or growth. But it is not the less, on that account, a human product. And, as a human product, it partakes of the incompleteness and progressive character which St. Paul attributes to our present knowledge, when he says, “We know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see through a glass, darkly : but then face to face : now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” Some things, perhaps, we know thoroughly and exhaustively, and were we to live ever so long we should know them no better than we do to-day. But these are very few. Even so simple a thing as the geometrical figure of

* Sir J. Herschel speaks as follows of the property the man of science has in the products of his mental labours :—“It must be remembered that the history of science is the history of mind—of that which is most essentially and emphatically personal. The thoughts of a philosopher and his incursions into the realm of unexplored truth are far more strictly his personal exploits than the victories of the general or the combinations of the statesman. Every step in the higher theories has been an achievement in which the *spolia opima* have fallen to the leader's prowess, and in falling have decided the day, however the masses may have rushed in and secured the conquest.”—*Quarterly Review*, vol. lxxviii. p. 186. Sir. J. Herschel's “Review of Whewell's History of Inductive Sciences.”

a circle may be distinctly before our minds, and yet years of study may be required to ascertain all its properties, and we can never be sure that no further discoveries can be made. Perfect truth is not the same as perfect knowledge of the truth. We may feel satisfied that we are right up to a certain point, although there may be something beyond. The knowledge we have reached is real knowledge, so far as it goes, although it is not complete. With this agrees the definition which has been given of science as "a body of generalizations so irrefragably true, that, though they may be subsequently covered by higher generalizations, they cannot be overthrown by them; in other words, generalizations which may be absorbed, but not refuted." No one will venture to say that we know about Christ all that fairly lies within the reach of human attainment; and if we were once clearly to distinguish between the objective reality of the living Christ, and the subjective knowledge of Him existing in our minds, we should not find it difficult to understand how Christ may be perfect and changeless, whilst our Christian science may be capable of change and improvement. And if this is to acknowledge imperfection in Christian theology, two things are to be remembered. First, that the imperfection of our knowledge does not make Christ imperfect: and, secondly, that what is imperfect is not always faulty; a science may be true, even whilst it is only partially developed.

§ 7. To be able clearly to distinguish between

things which differ so essentially as the Divine and the human, is one of the very chief conditions of the successful prosecution of Christian inquiry ; inasmuch as it enables us to draw a line between those things which come under the law of sacrifice and those which are exempt from it. The *matter* upon which thought is exercised in inquiry is Divine ; it is the Christ of God, who has offered Himself once for all unto God for us, in an offering never to be repeated. The *laws* of thought, too, are Divine ; we may discover them, but we do not create them. But the *product* of thought is human—so far human, that whatever help we receive from God in our endeavours to understand His gospel, we can never claim absolute perfection for our knowledge. It is always a *human* knowledge of *Divine* things. We are permitted to rejoice in the fruits of our intellectual labours, and to attribute all that is true and good in them to the effectual aid of the Holy Spirit. It is no sin to love the products of human thought, and the beautiful creations of human genius and imagination. We may lawfully use them, whether they come to us in the form of poem, or dogmatic creed, or scientific statement, or elaborate theological system. The danger begins when we fail to distinguish between the primitive “deposit” and the results of our mental action upon it ; when we are unconsciously led to put our changing science into the place of the unchanging Christ of God ; and when the subjective interpretation of Christ’s

words and acts, is held to be equivalent to the facts themselves. It is then that the human takes the place of the Divine; and, from that moment, to question the infallibility of the human interpretation is looked upon as a sinful questioning of the truth of God. The distinction between the Divine and the human has been obliterated; and the result is, that the human is now guarded with a jealousy as unyielding as if it were Divine, and all further inquiry is arrested.*

§ 8. But these productions of ours are altogether distinct from those great gospel truths and facts which are in no sense at all the creation of human thought, and which we are not at liberty to sacrifice at any bidding whatever. The astronomer may be ready, under proper conditions, to give up theories which have been elaborated with long and patient inquiry, and which have become firmly established in human belief. But it would be absurd for him to talk of giving up the sun, moon, and stars, and the various phenomena which those theories were created to interpret. We Christians in like manner, can, under no circumstances, abandon the words and works and sufferings of our Lord as historical facts. We can conceive of no possible case in which it would be right to do so, except such as would convert all the history of the past into an illusion and a dream. We did

* "We have often known men discover with surprise," says Archbishop Whately, "that Milton was the real authority for some statement which they believed to be in the Bible." — "Cautions for the Times," p. 855. See Appendix.

not create the facts of the gospel. They have an objective existence quite independent of our interpretation of their meaning. Our science is distinct from them and cannot alter them. They are given us as a sacred deposit or trading capital, to be converted by us to the uses of knowledge and salvation; and we are to contend earnestly for them, as "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." But it is very different with our knowledge of those facts. The inductive treatment of facts is always subject to tentative and inferential processes. The conclusions we reach are strictly our own. They are true and valuable just in proportion as they truly interpret the facts. We are entitled to hold them firmly, and to use them confidently in the conduct of our spiritual life; but we cannot claim for them the certainty which belongs to revealed and to necessary truths. Human interpretations of Divine words are the products of thought, and further thinking may modify or enlarge them. They are the "usury," varying in value, which we gain by trading with our Lord's "pound," and which He expects to receive from us as the fruit of our own diligence.

SECTION 2.—INTELLECTUAL SACRIFICE EXEMPLIFIED IN PHYSICAL SCIENCE.

§ 9. There is a very remarkable passage in the life of Sir Isaac Newton which will serve to exemplify the principle of sacrifice, as belonging to the ethics of inductive inquiry. It is recorded by

Conduitt. He says, "Mr. Molyneux related to us that after he and Mr. Graham and Dr. Bradley had put up a perpendicular telescope at Kew, to find out the parallax of the fixed stars, they found a certain nutation of the earth, which they could not account for, and which Molyneux told me he thought destroyed entirely the Newtonian system, and therefore he was under the greatest difficulty how to break it to Sir Isaac. And when he did break it by degrees, in the softest manner, all that Sir Isaac said in answer was, when he told me his opinion, 'It may be so, there is no arguing against facts and experiments.' " * At this time, Newton had taken his high place in the scientific world, on the ground of the very discoveries which were here called in question. Any man who has been ashamed to take back even an opinion of mere passing interest, once firmly expressed, may, by an effort of imagination, make the case his own; at least, sufficiently so to be able to understand the greatness of the sacrifice implied in such an answer. His system was the dearest thing he had in life; it had cost him vast mental labour to produce; but he was willing to let it go when loyalty to Truth required it of him.

§ 10. And this seems to have been the result of a settled principle which guided all Newton's inquiries. At the commencement of the Third Book of the Principia, he lays down four rules of philosophising. The following is a translation of the

* Brewster's "Life of Newton," vol. ii. p. 381, note.

fourth of these rules: — “Propositions collected from phenomena by induction shall be held true, notwithstanding contrary hypotheses; but shall be liable to be rendered more accurate, or have their exceptions pointed out, by additional study of phenomena.” * And in his *Optics* he has expounded more fully the method which he followed in his inquiries. “In Natural Philosophy the investigation of difficult things by the Method of Analysis ought ever to precede the Method of Composition. This analysis consists in making experiments and observations, and in drawing general conclusions from them by induction, and admitting of no objections against the conclusions, but such as are taken from experiments or other certain truths. For hypotheses are not to be regarded in experimental philosophy. And although the arguing from experiments and observations by induction be no demonstration of general conclusions, yet it is the best way of arguing which the nature of things admits of, and may be looked upon as so much stronger by how much the induction is more general. And if no objections occur from phenomena, the conclusion may be pronounced generally. But if at any time afterwards any exception shall occur from experiments, it may then begin to be pronounced with such objections as occur. By this way of analysis we may proceed from compounds to ingredients, and from motions to the forces producing them; and in general, from effects

* “*Philos. Nat. Principia Math.*” vol. iii. p. 4, Glasgow ed.

to their causes, and from particular causes to more general ones, till the argument end in the most general. This is the Method of Analysis, and the synthesis consists in assuming the causes discovered, and established as principles, and by them explaining the phenomena proceeding from them, and proving the explanations." *

§ 11. And such is the spirit in which all inductive truth is to be sought and held. "If even the Newtonian philosophy," says Mr. J. S. Mill, "were not permitted to be questioned, mankind could not feel as complete assurance of its truth as they now do. The beliefs which we have most warrant for have no safeguard to rest on, but a standing invitation to the whole world to prove them unfounded. If the challenge is not accepted, or is accepted, and the attempt fails, we are far enough from certainty still; but we have done the best that the existing state of human reason admits of. We have neglected nothing that could give the truth a chance of reaching us; if the lists are kept open, we may hope that if there be a better truth, it will be found when the human mind is capable of receiving it; and in the mean time we may rely on having attained such an approach to truth as is possible in our own day. This is the amount of certainty attainable by a fallible being, and this is the sole way of attaining it." † In the mean time we have the consolation of knowing that any uncertainty

* Newton's "Optics," book iii. p. 880, 4th ed.

† Mill on Liberty, p. 41.

that exists respecting human science does not extend to the Divine reality of things themselves.

§ 12. Such is the real condition of inductive knowledge. It is a human product, and as such it partakes of human incompleteness; but at the same time it has in it all the reality of human experience. The certainty of facts, not the finality of science, is its true ground of rest. This certainty is confirmed by the practical mastery which it gives over the realities of life, and by the power of prevision with which it endows us, but it never amounts to the certainty of mathematical demonstration. It may seem a very perilous thing to make such avowals respecting the much-vaunted and really marvellous achievements of inductive inquiry. But it is upon our acception of this very risk that the success of physical inquiry rests. A willingness to give up all that is dearest to us of our own thoughts, to the supremacy of truth and reality, is the necessary condition of a constant approximation of human science to the full meaning of the Divine facts. The stability of the intellectual world, no less than the stability of the material world, is secured, not by a dead rest, but by a perpetual motion. Such a view of our condition involves a great venture of faith and the abandonment of some of our earliest and deepest convictions; but such believing sacrifice becomes the most potent instrument of progress and improvement. Nothing but a strong faith in the inexhaustible wealth of the inheritance which God

has prepared for us can give us courage to accept such conditions of self-renunciation. "The promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that received the promises offered up his only begotten son, accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

SECTION 3.—DISTINCTION BETWEEN DIVINE FACTS AND THEIR HUMAN INTERPRETATION.

§ 13. A very beautiful (because a typical) example of the difference between Christian facts and the human interpretation of them, and of the spirit in which we should deal with the latter, is furnished by an event which occurred just before our Lord's departure. The incident is, at first sight, of very trifling interest, and scarcely promises to give us much light upon so great a subject as the ethics of Christian inquiry. But then it is to be observed that the very greatest principles may be exemplified in small things as well as in great; just as "that secret of Nature, the turning of iron into a magnet, was found out in needles of iron, not in bars of iron."* The use of such an example may, indeed, to use Macaulay's illustration, resemble "an action of ejectment brought for a single farm, with a view of trying the title to a large estate." The incident

* Bacon's "Advancement of Learning," p. 28.

in question is related at the end of St. John's Gospel. Our Lord had used obscure language to Peter, which the Evangelist interpreted as "signifying by what death he should glorify God." And the interpretation was not called in question. But when Jesus went on to say, in answer to Peter's question respecting the destiny of John, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" an interpretation was given to the words which certainly was not true: "Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die." And then the Evangelist, as if in a state of doubt, goes on, without deciding on the matter, to bring the interpretation face to face with the very words of Jesus. "Yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"*

§ 14. Such is the example; and it furnishes us, when generalised, with a principle of very wide application,—a principle, in fact, by which we are taught to separate all Christ's sayings from the catholic theories which may have been framed for

* "This explicit declaration, that no such meaning lay in the words, was not sufficient to extinguish altogether such a belief or superstition in the Church. We find many traces of it at many times: even his death and burial, which men were compelled to acknowledge, were not sufficient to abolish it. For his death, men said, was not really death, but only the appearance of death, and he yet breathed in his grave; so that even an Augustine was unable wholly to resist the reports which had reached him, that the earth yet heaved over the apostle's grave, and the dust was lightly stirred by the regular pulses of his breath. The fable of his still living Augustine at once rejects, but is more patient with this report than one would have looked for, counting it possible that a permanent miracle might there be finding place."—Trench on the Miracles, p. 466.

their interpretation: whether the saying be so great a one as that "the Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many," and the theories of the atonement which are built upon it; or whether the saying be so small a one as that which is now before us. In looking closely at this example, we have three distinct elements to deal with. First, there is the saying of Jesus, or what we may call the simple historical fact. Then there is, secondly, the interpretation of that saying which obtained currency in the primitive Church. And, finally, we have the mental attitude assumed by the inspired Evangelist himself, both towards the saying of Jesus and towards the Church-interpretation of that saying.

§ 15. The first thing is the saying of Jesus. Among the brethren, this would be received as unquestionably true. All His words were to them the true sayings of God. In giving Him their confidence, they were only fulfilling the first condition of discipleship. He, in His intercessory prayer, said, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have believed that thou didst send me." And again He said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." So that, among believers, the words of Jesus, whether mandatory, doctrinal, or prophetic, stood apart from human uncertainty, and were held to be authoritative and Divine. Once satisfied that the saying was authentic—or, in other words, that Jesus had really uttered it—believers would accept it as a matter of course.

§ 16. But in stepping over from the saying of Jesus to the interpretation which was given of it, and which obtained currency among the brethren, we pass into another region of thought. The sacredness which belongs to the Christian facts does not extend to the human theories respecting them. In presence of Christ's sayings, we have to do with what is positive, authoritative, and Divine. But in presence of the human interpretation of His sayings, we have to do with what is scientific, conjectural, and theoretical, with what may be possibly true, or possibly false, or partly true, or true in a certain sense, or wholly false. We have, therefore, to observe that in regard to all Christ's sayings, and not in regard to this alone, a broad line of distinction exists between the Divine fact and the human interpretation; so that, whilst the Divine is fixed and changeless, the human is liable to mistake, to uncertainty, to partiality, and to error. All the inferential doctrines, whether inductive or deductive, partake of this character.*

* **INFERENTIAL THEOLOGY.** "Within certain limits, and under due guidance, 'inference' is the movement, it is the life of theology. . . . The illuminative reason of the collective Church has for ages been engaged in studying the original materials of the Christian revelation. What is theology but a continuous series of observations and systematised inferences respecting God in His nature and His dealings with mankind, drawn from promises which rest upon Divine authority? Do you say that no 'inference' is, under any circumstances, legitimate? that no truth in theology necessarily implies another? that the Christian mind ought to preserve in a jealous, sterile isolation, each proposition that can be extracted from the Scriptures? Do you suppose that the several truths of the Christian creed are so many separate, unfruitful, unsuggestive dogmas, having no traceable relations to each other? Do you take it for granted that each revealed truth involves nothing that

Let them be taken at their full value as the precious results of the best human endeavour, precious to God and precious to ourselves ; but, at the same time, let them not be confounded with the Divine realities which they may only imperfectly interpret. The authority and certainty of Christ's words are undisturbed by our imperfect interpretations and our fierce controversies ; just as the quiet moon is undisturbed by the drifting agitation of the clouds through which it seems to wade, but which in reality belong only to our own atmosphere.

§ 17. In coming, finally, to the third element which makes up the example, we find in the mental attitude of the Evangelist himself a feeling of doubt as to the truth of the received interpretation of the saying of Jesus. He confronts the human interpretation with the Divine saying ; and in so doing he teaches us the value and place of Scepticism in the prosecution of inquiry. Doubt applies not to the words of Christ, but to the meaning which is attached to the words by the brethren. This is the true sphere of doubt. Unquestioning faith in facts is perfectly consistent with a hesitating acceptance, and even with a complete rejection of Catholic interpretations of

is not seen to lie on the very surface of the terms which express it ? If so, of course it is natural that you should deprecate any earnest scrutiny of the worth and consequences of these abstractions ; you deprecate it as an interfering with moral and practical interests ; you deem an inferential theology alike illusory and mischievous."—Liddon's "Bampton Lecture for 1866," p. 441.

them. The sceptical method adopted in this instance by St. John is to confront the Catholic interpretation with the very words which Christ employed. By doing so, he might appear to be robbing the Church of a fond tradition which had filled its imagination and, by so much, to render it poorer in the objects of mental interest. It may require some courage to fall back upon the poverty of facts, and even more to fall back upon the heterodoxy of facts. This is what the Evangelist did. But, by doing so, the Evangelist was restoring the Church to the simple words of Christ, and to the possibility of a new interpretation of them. It was better (in his view) that we should be made poor for the sake of standing nearer to Christ. When the erroneous interpretation was given up, there would be a chance of finding, hidden in the words, some spiritual truth of far greater value than the hypothesis which had been abandoned. So far is doubt from being necessarily sinful (as it is sometimes represented), that it is, when rightly exercised, one of the most valuable means by which we are enabled to escape from error and to reach the truth. The revolt of the intellect against human interpretation is, in such cases, the result of a deeper faith in God.

§ 18. To abstain from interpretation altogether, may be regarded by some as the best safeguard against erroneous conclusions. But this would be to repeat the fault of that "wicked and slothful servant," in the parable, who gave back his lord's

pound as he had received it, saying, "Behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin;" and to whom his lord said, "Wherefore gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?" The Christian facts are given us to interpret. Liability to mistake does not relieve us of the duty. Our very mistakes, if wisely managed and corrected, will contribute to our moral discipline. Thought is exercised. We guess, and see reason to reject our guesses. We suspend our judgment till fresh light comes. We exercise self-denial, and put a restraint upon the impetuosity of our judgment. In all this a wholesome moral schooling is being carried forward. The risk which we may have to encounter is a necessary condition of the training process.

§ 19. The distinction which has been pointed out between Divine things and their human interpretation, is of great value, not only as revealing to us the sphere in which scepticism may legitimately be exercised, without incurring the imputation of revolt against Divine authority, but also as enabling us to understand in what sense Christianity is to be looked upon as a progressive science, even whilst we hold it to be a fixed and changeless revelation from God. When we speak of intellectual sacrifice as a powerful instrument of progress, it is, of course, necessary to understand in what sense progress is possible.

§ 20. The distinction before us reveals the inter-

esting fact which I pointed out at the beginning of this essay, that there are, in reality, two Christianities—one Objective and the other Subjective. Christianity as it exists in Christ is the Objective Christianity, a perfect revelation from God, and wholly independent of our knowledge or belief. Christianity, as it exists in human consciousness and experience, is the Subjective Christianity, partially apprehended, capable of growing in clearness and in power over the life and character; so that we may be consistently exhorted to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. If these two Christianities—the objective and the subjective—should ever exactly coincide, the complete salvation of the world would seem to be near at hand.

§ 21. In physical inquiry, the distinction between the facts to be interpreted and the interpretations of those facts in which science consists, may be clearly seen. Human knowledge adds nothing to the material facts which it undertakes to explain. “The motions of the stars, and the effects of weight,” says Dr. Whewell, “were familiar to man long before the rise of the Greek astronomy and mechanics; but the diviner mind was still absent, the act of thought had not been exerted, by which these facts were bound together under the form of laws and principles. And even at this day the tribes of uncivilised and half-civilised men over the whole face of the earth have before their eyes a vast body of facts, of exactly the same nature as

those with which Europe has built up the stately fabric of her physical philosophy ; but in almost every other part of the earth the process of the intellect by which those facts become science is unknown. The scattered stones are indeed there, but the builder's hand is wanting."* Physical science is progressive, whilst the creation itself is a completed work. By an illusion like that which, in all departments of life, leads us to attribute our own motion to objects which are really at rest, Nature seems to grow upon us ; whilst in reality it remains the same amidst all our changes, except so far as we actually succeed in transforming nature by the aid of the knowledge of its laws which we obtain by inquiry.

§ 22. Had this distinction presented itself to the mind of Lord Macaulay, he could scarcely have reached the conclusion which he enunciated in his celebrated essay on the Revolutions in the Papacy, that in Christian theology there can be no progress when once the volume of revelation is complete. "All Divine truth," he says, "is, according to the doctrine of the Protestant Churches, recorded in certain books. It is equally open to all who in any

* Whewell's "History of Inductive Science," vol. i. p. 8. "The same phenomena which were present to the mind of Newton had been present to innumerable minds before, not to the understanding of philosophers only, but to the very senses of the vulgar. Everything was the same to him and to them, except the observing and reasoning mind. To him alone, however, they suggested these striking analogies by which, on a comparison of all the known circumstances in both, he ventured to class the force which retains the planets in their orbits with that which occasions the fall of a pebble to the earth."—Dr. T. Brown's "Lectures on Philosophy of Mind," p. 8.

age can read those books, nor can all the discoveries of all the philosophers add a single verse to any of the books. It is plain, therefore, that in Divinity there cannot be a progress analagous to that which is constantly taking place in pharmacy, geology, and navigation. A Christian of the fifth century with a Bible is neither better nor worse situated than a Christian in the nineteenth century with a Bible, candour and natural acuteness being equal." *

§ 23. The answer to this has been already given (p. 223) and amounts to this; that the growth of Christian theology no more means the adding of fresh verses to the Bible, than the progress of astronomy means the adding of fresh stars to the heavens. The completeness of nature does not imply the completeness of our knowledge of nature. So, too, in regard to the Bible and to Christ. Independently of us, they have an existence of their own. Our knowledge of them may, however, be continually advancing. It is, therefore, perfectly possible that there may be a true theory of the "development of Christian doctrine," as Möhler, and, after him, Newman has asserted,—that there may be a "theology peculiar to successive ages—a theology of the Fathers differing from the theology of the schoolmen," and so forth, as Dean Stanley has declared;—and that there may be a Christianity of the future, "of a very much more perfect character than the Christianity of the present," as Dean Alford delighted to anticipate.†

* *Edinburgh Review*. No. cxlv. p. 280.

† See Appendix.

§ 24. Bishop Butler had a far clearer view than Lord Macaulay of the true state of the case, when he said: "Practical Christianity, or that faith and behaviour which renders a man a Christian, is a plain and obvious thing; like the common rules of conduct with respect to our ordinary temporal affairs. The more distinct and particular knowledge of those things, the study of which the Apostle calls 'going on unto perfection,' and of the prophetic parts of revelation, like many parts of natural and even civil knowledge, may require very exact thought and careful consideration. The hindrances, too, of natural and of supernatural light and knowledge, have been of the same kind. And as it is owned the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood, so, if it ever comes to be understood before the 'restitution of all things,' and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty—and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered. For, all the same phenomena, and

the same faculties of investigation, from which such great discoveries in natural knowledge have been made in the present and last ages, were equally in the possession of mankind several thousand years before. And, possibly, it might be intended, that events, as they come to pass, should open and ascertain the meaning of several parts of Scripture."*

§ 25. It will now be easy to see how, as I have so often insisted on already, we may combine in thought two things which have often appeared so antagonistic to each other, as fixedness and progress, stability and growth, certainty and inquiry. By faith in Christ as the perfect revelation of God, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," we obtain a rooting into everlasting certainty. But then this settlement is not the dead rest of a buried stone. It is the planting of a living germ; which, whilst it takes hold upon the ground, begins to push its way in all directions, assimilating the soil and answering to all the influences which act

* Butler's "Analogy," part ii. chap. 8. Lord Bacon says: "As for perfection or completeness in divinity, it is not to be sought, which makes this course of artificial divinity (the scholastic) the more suspect. For he that will reduce knowledge into an art, will make it round and uniform; but in divinity many things must be left abrupt and concluded with this: 'O altitudo,' &c. So again the Apostle saith, 'Ex parte scimus,' and to have the form of a total, where there is but matter for a part, cannot be without supplies by supposition and presumption. And therefore I conclude that the true use of these sums and methods hath place in institutions or introductions preparatory unto knowledge; but in them, or by deducement from them, to handle the main body and substance of a knowledge is, in all sciences, prejudicial, and, in divinity, dangerous."—"Advancement of Learning," Works, vol. i. p. 78

upon it. The soul that cleaves to Christ is not holding upon a shifting sand ; and, so long as it holds to Him as the object of faith, it can rest in peace. Whilst, at the same time, amidst the repose of faith, mental processes may go forward, which shall result in the modification of opinions once held, the abandonment of convictions once cherished and the reception of truths altogether new to the mind. Faith in Christ is, at once, a principle of rest and a principle of progress, and in both these the spirit of sacrifice is implied. The things which before faith were held dear are counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. And, after faith, there is a readiness to forget the things which are behind, and to reach forward to those things which are before.

§ 26. It was in the spirit of such Intellectual Sacrifice that Bacon wrote the closing sentence of his greatest philosophical work. "It may be said of my views that they require an age, perhaps a whole age, to prove them, and many ages to perfect them. Notwithstanding, seeing the greatest things are indebted to their beginnings, it is enough to me that I have sown to posterity and the immortal God, whose Divine Majesty I humbly implore, through His Son and our Saviour, that He would vouchsafe graciously to accept these and such like sacrifices of human understanding, seasoned with religion as with salt, and offered up to His glory."*

* "De Augmentis." B. 9, *in fine*.

CHAPTER VII.

OF INTELLECTUAL ATHEISM AND THE IDOLS OF THE MIND.

§ 1. THE distinction pointed out in the last chapter between facts and the human interpretation of facts, has other important bearings upon the ethics of inquiry besides those already noticed. It will, for example, help to save us from the double danger which besets the exercise of reason in regard to our intellectual relations to God. The first is that of refusing to recognise any but a human origin to scientific truths, and the second is that of attributing a supernatural origin to the early and crude presumptions of the human mind ; or, in other words, Intellectual Atheism and Intellectual Idolatry.

SECTION 1.—OF INTELLECTUAL ATHEISM.

§ 2. The first danger is that of Intellectual Atheism. When we regard our knowledge as coextensive with the things known, we are liable to regard the truth we reach as the original product of human genius, and not the reproduction of the Divine thoughts ; or in other words, as the *invention*, and not the mere *discovery*, of the

human mind. And then God is shut out of the intellectual world altogether, and all the glory of knowledge is given to man alone. It is just as if the student of the *Iliad* (for example), who should succeed in getting into the spirit of the author and in reproducing it in his own language, should labour under the enormous delusion that he was himself the author of the work, and not merely its interpreter.

§ 3. When, indeed, Kepler was said to be "the lawgiver of the heavens,"* we do not suppose for a moment that it was meant that he was to be regarded as the creator of the solar system. And when Galileo is said to have "given four moons to Jupiter," we are not in any danger of supposing that Jupiter had no moons before Galileo turned his telescope to the heavens. But the matter becomes serious when we are deliberately told by a man of science, as M. Comte undoubtedly was, that "at the present day, for minds early familiarised with the true astronomical philosophy, the heavens no longer declare any other glory than that of Hipparchus, of Kepler, of Newton, and of all those who have contributed to establish their laws."†

§ 4. Let our men of science have the glory of being the successful interpreters of Nature, and so

* "Life of Kepler," by Drinkwater Bethune, p. 29.

† Aujourd'hui, pour les esprits familiarisés de bonne heure avec a varie philosophie astronomique, les cieux ne racontent plus d'autre gloire que celle d'Hipparque, de Kepler, de Newton, et de tous ceux qui ont concouru à en établir les lois.—"Cours de Philos. Pos." par M. Aug. Comte. Tom. ii. p 36, note.

of sharing the very thoughts of the Divine mind, and of rendering them in new forms of outward expression. But to rob God of the higher glory of the original authorship of the wonderful book of nature, is no less unscientific, than it is immoral and irreligious. The discoverers, themselves, were free from any such subjective delusion of supposing that the truths they discovered were the creation of their own genius. When, for example, Kepler discovered the celebrated law connecting the mean distances of the planets with the periods of their revolution about the sun, he breaks out in this language:—"It is now eighteen months since I got the first glimpse of light, three months since the dawn, very few days since the unveiled sun, most admirable to gaze upon, burst upon me. Nothing holds me; I will indulge my sacred fury; I will triumph over mankind by the honest confession that I have stolen the golden vases of the Egyptians [in allusion to the Harmonics of Ptolemy] to build up a tabernacle for my God far away from the confines of Egypt. If you forgive me, I rejoice; if you are angry, I can bear it: the die is cast, the book is written, to be read either now or by posterity, I care not which: it may well wait for a century for a reader, as God has waited six thousand years for an observer."*

§ 5. Mr. Mill combats the subjective tendency upon which this error is founded. He says: "According to Dr. Whewell, the conception [of an

* "Life of Kepler," by Drinkwater Bethune, p. 42.

ellipse in the mind of Kepler] was something added to the facts. He expresses himself as if Kepler had put something into the facts by his mode of conceiving them. But Kepler did no such thing. The ellipse was in the facts before Kepler recognised it: just as the island was an island before it had been sailed round. Kepler did not put what he had conceived into the facts, but *saw* it in them. A conception implies and corresponds to something conceived; and though the conception itself is not in the facts, but in our mind, yet if it is to convey any knowledge relating to them, it must be a conception of something which really is in the facts, some property which they actually possess, and which they would manifest to our senses if our senses were able to take cognizance of it." *

§ 6. As an example of the manner in which this subjective spirit operates when it is introduced into the circle of Christianity, it is only needful to recall the manner in which the "Life of Jesus" has been treated by M. Renan. The supernatural character of the historical facts in which the most fundamental of its doctrines are bodied forth, is altogether denied, and the doctrines themselves are attributed to a purely human origin. The resurrection of our Lord, for example, upon which so much depends, is converted into a subjective creation of the human mind; and the glory that belongs to it (if any) is ascribed, not to God, but

* Mill's "Logic," vol. i. p. 380, 6th ed.

to the fervent devotion of Mary Magdalene and to the genius of St. Paul.

SECTION 2.—OF INTELLECTUAL IDOLATRY.

§ 7. But it is the second and opposite danger which is to be chiefly considered in this chapter—that of investing with the sacred character of truth those early presumptions of the human mind which have given birth to the great fallacies by which the progress of knowledge has been most effectually hindered. This is Intellectual Idolatry. It is not, indeed, necessarily the gross and material form of idolatry which prevailed among the heathen; although, even there, the material image was always the embodiment of some ideal conception, of some religious emotion, or of some generalised thought of the human mind.* The design of inductive inquiry is to enable us to see things as they really are, as distinguished from what they first appear to the untrained intellect—to discover the Divine meaning of things, instead of being satisfied with our own early guesses, or the traditions of the past.

§ 8. “An idol,” says St. Paul, “is nothing in the world.” It is no constituent part of God’s universe. It exists, so far forth as it is an idol, simply as a creation of the human mind. We project our own thoughts and emotions into things around us, or we give them external expression

* “It is not now of wood and stone that men make their idols, but of their own abstract conceptions. Before these, borrowing for them the attributes of personality, they bow down and worship.”—“Reign of Law,” by the Duke of Argyle, p. 112.

of some kind; we then mistake these thoughts for realities; and so we live more or less in a world of illusion and falsehood, without knowing it. We first create our own figments; and then these figments, in their turn, react upon us, giving rise to false knowledge, false fears, false terrors, false religions, and a false conscience. We make our own idols, and then exact cruel tasks from ourselves in their service. "The life of the savage," says Sir J. Lubbock, "is one prolonged scene of selfishness and fear. Even in his religion, if he has any, he creates for himself a new source of terror, and peoples the world with invisible enemies." Within certain limits man enjoys the prerogative of creation; but this prerogative, when exercised in a spirit of self-dependence and without submission to God, results in the production of "lying vanities," vulgar errors, and false theories of science. The delusion only ends when the spirit of doubt prompts us to ask, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?" The idol is then seen to be a mere imagination, a "thing of naught." We find out that we "were in great fear, where no fear was."* And then our own creations, which held us so long in bondage, vanish into thin air. "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens."† And so the Legends of Olympus, the Categories of Aristotle, the Vortices of Descartes; the whole tribe of ghosts, of witches, and of

* Psa. liii. 5.

† Jer. x. 11.

fairies, must vanish out of the world, simply by vanishing out of our belief. We remember them as we remember our dreams. They are real to us only while we sleep, but while the sleep lasts they are often either pleasantly or terribly real.

§ 9. The prophet Ezekiel has given us a vivid description of the leaders of Jewish thought who, in his time, failed in their religious inquiries through their spiritual idolatry. He says: "Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me. And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them? Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols; that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols."* When God gives men up to their idols, things become like those Chinese figures which, when we hold them before us and shake them, bow assent to everything we say. Facts come to speak just as we wish them to speak, and give back nothing but our own thoughts. The fault consists, not in

* Ezek. xiv. 1-5.

having hypotheses of our own, but in converting such hypotheses into convictions, and resting in them as positive truths. The ethics of inquiry demand, as a supreme condition of success, that we allow no "imagination of our own hearts" to usurp the place of Truth. Christianity claims no exemption from the common peril. Our Lord has expressly warned us that "there shall arise false christs," * as there have been false gods; christs which men make for themselves, altogether unlike the Christ of God.

§ 10. One of the greatest services which Lord Bacon rendered to the ethics of inquiry was the exposition of the Doctrine of Idols contained in the first book of his "*Novum Organum*." Dr. T. Brown † says of him, that "if he was not the first who discovered that we were in some degree idolaters, to use his own metaphor, in our intellectual worship, he was certainly the first to discover the extent of our idolatry. But we must not forget that the temple which he purified was not the temple of external nature, but the temple of the mind; that in its inmost sanctuaries were all the idols which he overthrew; and that it was not till these were removed and the intellect prepared for

* Matt. xxiv. 24.

† Lectures on the Philosophy of the Mind. Lecture 2. "Let men learn the difference that exists between the idols of the human mind and the ideas of the Divine mind. The former are mere arbitrary abstractions; the latter the true marks of the Creator on His creatures, as they are imprinted on, and defined in matter, by true and exquisite touches. Truth, therefore, and utility are here perfectly identical, and the effects are of more value as pledges of truth than for the benefit they confer on men."—"Novum Organum," b. i. aph. 124.

the presence of a nobler divinity, that truth would begin to unveil herself to adoration; as in the mysteries of those Eastern religions, in which the first ceremony for admission to the worship of the god is the purification of the worshipper."

§ 11. It is not the mere presence of bias that constitutes idolatry, but the yielding of the mind wholly to its influence without moral control. The various kinds of fallacies to which such ill-regulated bias has given rise, are by Bacon called the Idols of the Mind. These have been classified by him under four heads, which he has called in his own quaint manner: 1. *Idola Tribus*, idols of the race; 2. *Idola Specus*, idols of the cave; 3. *Idola Fori*, idols of the market-place; and 4, *Idola Theatri*, idols of the theatre. This classification has obtained such general acceptance that no attempt will here be made to disturb it. We shall, therefore, speak (1) of those illusions or presumptions which arise from the common infirmities or corruption of human nature, as the idols of the tribe; (2) of those which arise from the deceiving influence of egotism and individual interest, as the idols of the cave; (3) of those which arise from mistaking the symbols of thought for the reality of things, as the idols of the market-place; and (4) of those which arise from sectarian and party zeal, as the idols of the theatre. We shall, in this way, be led to consider those prepossessions which result from (1) the bias of nature, (2) the bias of interest, (3) the bias of language, and (4) the bias of party; as

all tending to hinder us from inquiring narrowly into the naked reality or truth of things.

CLASS 1.—IDOLS OF THE TRIBE.

§ 12. The Idols of the Tribe are here spoken of as those illusions which spring from the common infirmity of human nature. This natural liability to mistake reveals itself in the fact that the earliest presumptions which arise in men's minds are not always true, but are generally more or less illusory, distorted, and misleading. The thoughts which spontaneously offer themselves in the childhood of knowledge, would do us little injury if we were taught to regard them as the tentative and unskilled efforts of the mind to respond to its first contact with external facts. But, when rested in as fully answering to the reality of things, they become intellectual spectres. The fact is, we do not at first see things as they truly are. Our fears, our hopes, our passions impart their own shape and colour to outward objects. We see pestilence foreshadowed in an eclipse, the wrath of God in the thunderstorm, and ghosts in a dark room.

§ 13. The history of science is, accordingly, the history of men's second thoughts ; of the correction of the superstitions, the exaggerations, and the distortions of their earliest conceptions of things. Our reformatations consist very much in the repealing and getting rid of a great deal that has grown upon us, and in the unlearning and breaking off from what we once held as true. "The mind," says

Bacon, "is so far from being like a smooth, equal, and clear glass, which might sincerely take and reflect the beams of things according to their true incidence, that it is rather like an enchanted glass full of superstitions, apparitions, and enchantments." * The image of the most beautiful face, if received upon a photographic plate of soiled or irregular surface, will appear distorted, and bear no resemblance to the original, although it is actually produced by the rays of light received from that face, and through a lens of perfect construction.

§ 14. But even when there is no corrupt bias, the natural immaturity of the intellect has to be taken into account. Incompleteness of growth and training is altogether distinct from the perversion of sin. The earliest products of our faculties are always imperfect. The mind needs education, as well as the senses, before it can do its work well. When we begin to use the hand in writing or music, or in any art whatever, we commit many mistakes. Uneducated faculty is always defective. In moral agents, nature itself truly becomes nature, in the highest sense, only by careful training. Our greatest lessons are often learnt through failures wisely improved. Such mistakes are the result of incompleteness, and not necessarily of corruption. But if we accept the first spontaneous results of thought as the perfect interpretation of the mystery of life, we commit a serious error. The early *a priori* presumptions

* "De Augmentis," book v. Wats' Translation, p. 249.

which seem so natural, that we cannot conceive them otherwise than true, then become idols, and pollute the mind. They contain, no doubt, some element of fact or some forecast of truth, and may serve as a mental primer, or as a preparatory discipline. In every case we learn the truth from the appearance, even when that appearance is illusory. That the sun seems to rise in the east will never cease to be a fact, whatever may be the after-teaching of astronomical science. Our first natural impressions are never wholly false, and they will always serve as stepping-stones to higher knowledge, if we use them aright.

§ 15. Till the spectral character of their early presumptions has been mastered there is little hope for the great mass of mankind. If these presumptions were regarded as provisional to serve the uses of schooling, it would matter little what forms they took. But when they are rested in, all hope of escape is cut off. A man might then just as well try to escape from his own shadow as to separate himself from the religion of his early education. We accordingly find men in all parts of the world, and in all ages, following the creeds and forms of worship to which they have been accustomed from their infancy, however false and delusive they may be; and all free inquiry is regarded as a spiritual revolt, and a sinful insubordination of the intellect. It is thus in all ages, and under every possible form of religion. The Jew, the Catholic, the Lutheran, the Mohammedan, is too devoutly convinced of the

truth of the system in which he has been trained, to feel it right even to pause and say, "May there not after all be a higher truth?" It takes the blood of Christ to redeem men from the iron bondage of traditional religion.

§ 16. When the facts we have to deal with are those which relate to human character and history, the evils of this form of illusion are very serious. The interpretation of human facts is, in one respect, at least, much easier than the interpretation of physical facts, although the former infinitely surpass the latter in complexity. This facility is due, as I have already pointed out (see p. 52), to the compensating presence of the principle of human sympathy. We are capable of the wonderful power of seeing ourselves in other men, and of seeing other men in ourselves. But this power we enjoy under conditions of deep responsibility. To see ourselves in other men, enables us to lay the whole human race under contribution to help us, either by warning or example, in the building up of our own character. But when we reverse the order, and see other men in ourselves, we incur a great moral risk. We are then apt to make ourselves the measure of humanity, and to suppose that all other men must think and feel exactly as we do. A selfish man cannot believe in benevolence. A man of a worldly spirit will believe that all men have their price. A good man, in his turn, will regard any variation from his own style of excellency with impatience; and if he is earnest in his

theological convictions, will even treat such variation as a crime. Intolerance will then be looked upon as zeal for truth, and persecution as a benevolent compassion for souls. This self-idolatry is the key to the unnatural cruelty which has sometimes marked the past history of the Christian Church.

§ 17. It makes all the difference whether, in Christian inquiry, we set out with the idea that we are to interpret Christ by ourselves, or are to interpret ourselves by Christ; whether we are to take ourselves as the normal standard of human nature, or are to take Him as the standard; whether (after the analogy of the Ptolemaic conception of the universe) we are to regard ourselves as the central point around which all human things are to revolve; or whether (after the analogy of the Copernican theory) we are to look upon Christ as the fixed point and centre of humanity, gathering to Himself, by a spiritual force, all believing souls. To see ourselves in Christ, is to obtain the true vision of our high calling and of our future destiny. Christ has come into humanity, and therefore He is not merely external and objective, in the same sense as are the objects of physical science. The objects of the material world are external to humanity, and can only be studied as external. But Christ is a partaker of our own nature. We can find ourselves in Him, and we can use the common sympathies of humanity in order to help us to understand Him.

CLASS 2.—IDOLS OF THE DEN.

§ 18. By the Idols of the Den we shall here understand those illusions which arise from our own personal prepossessions, interests, and prejudices. So far are these illusions from being common to mankind, that every one, except those who are subject to them, is aware of their perverting influence. Whatever has been said as to belief always following the inherent strength of evidence, it is simply matter of fact that men, when under the influence of bias, form their judgments of actions according to the colour which they bring with them, and in which those actions are contemplated. Those who hated Christ, or thought Him a "deceiver of the people," were quite incapable of giving a true interpretation of His words and deeds. If we dislike a person, even his good actions will not seem good to us; and it is hard to be convinced that those we love can do anything amiss.

§ 19. Self-interest will, in like manner, create presumptions in favour of theories which all disinterested persons would at once reject as untenable and even absurd. The fable which makes the Currier compete with the Mason, and declare his belief that leather was a better material than stone for constructing the fortifications of the town, is true to human nature. And it was perfectly natural for the craftsmen of Ephesus to support the theology and the worship of the great Goddess Diana, seeing that it was thereby "that they had their wealth." Macaulay tells how, when King

James I. required all dependent on the court to support his policy, one custom-house officer notified his submission to the royal will in a way that excited both merriment and compassion. "I have," he said, "fourteen reasons for obeying his Majesty's commands, a wife and thirteen children. Such reasons were indeed cogent; yet there were not a few instances in which even against such reasons religious and patriotic feelings prevailed." There is a Latin fable which tells that the wolf once went to school. His master said he never had so untoward a scholar. He got over *a* to *g*, and skipped to *n*, *u*, *s*, but never learned more.

§ 20. Men have their special pursuits, which, under the names of "crotchets" and "hobbies," give rise to fixed ideas; and these, in their turn, become the ruling thoughts of their entire intellectual life. They remind us of that singular optical illusion which takes place when we are rapidly travelling along the road: wherever the eye fastens a centre is created, and every object within the range of vision seems to throw itself into a circular movement around that spot; trees, and houses, and cattle appear to spin round the one point upon which the eye rests. "He that is giddy thinks the world turns round."

CLASS 3.—IDOLS OF THE FORUM.

§ 21. The third class of idols are those which arise from our liability to mistake the symbols of thought for the reality of things. And as words

are the principal medium through which the traffic of the intellectual world is carried on, these are called by Bacon the idols of the market-place, and they are pronounced by him to be "the most troublesome of all." This species of illusion consists in the raising of words, and the logical combination of verbal reasoning, into a value that does not truly belong to them; and it proceeds upon the assumption that language adequately represents facts. "Men believe that their thoughts govern their words; whilst, in fact, it also happens that, by a certain kind of reaction, their words govern their thoughts. This is the more injurious, because words are generally formed in a popular sense, and define things by those broad lines which are most obvious to the common mind. But when a more acute understanding, or a more diligent investigation, suggests the necessity for more accurate definitions, so as to adapt them more closely to reality, words murmur against it. Hence the great and solemn disputes of learned men often terminate in controversies about words and names." *

§ 22. A very large inheritance of what may be called "unconscious science" is, no doubt, treasured up in the current language of mankind; and the history of words would, if it could be traced, reveal much of the natural growth of knowledge. But as long as the science is imperfect, the language in which it is expressed must bear

* "Novum Organum," book i. aph. 59.

the marks of that imperfection, and will even continue to bear those marks long after our knowledge itself has outgrown its early mistakes; as, for example, when we still speak of "lunacy," "sunrise," and the "falling of dew."

§ 23. The habit of seeking for science in the common uses of words, and in the logical deductions derived from them, has led men to satisfy themselves with examining the dictionary, instead of investigating facts as the source of true knowledge. Dr. Whewell has traced the failure of the later Greek philosophers to their acceptance of the meaning of words as identical with the truth of things, instead of seeking to enlarge experience by a fresh appeal to facts. "The physical philosophy of the Greek schools was formed by looking at the material world through the medium of that common language which men employ, to answer the common occasions of life; and by adopting, arbitrarily, as the grounds of comparison of facts, and of inference from them, notions more abstract and large than those with which men are practically familiar, but not less vague and obscure. Such a philosophy, however much it might be systematized by classifying and analysing the conceptions which it involves, could not overcome the vices of its fundamental principles." *

§ 24. But this idolatry of words is not confined to physical inquiry. "Reasonings," says Bishop Hampden, "may be well framed, and conclusions

* Whewell's "History of Inductive Science," vol. i. p. 87.

accurately drawn, and systems of theology erected by the mere use of the terms of theology as signs; just as, in arithmetic, calculations are carried on without referring, at each step, to the particular things represented, and by simply attending, during the process, to the relative value of the numbers. For example, whether it be pounds or pence that we have to deal with, the calculation is the same: to avail ourselves of the result, we must bear in mind the things to which it refers. But whereas calculations, however correct, are simply useless, unless we interpret their results; in theology reasonings are worse than useless if they are nothing but reasonings: they incur the guilt of perverse disputing and of an empty form of godliness, unless we look from our conclusions to the sacred objects about which they are conversant, and see that we really believe and cherish, not mere *names*, but *things*." *

§ 25. Sometimes this idolatry of words takes the form of a passionate attachment to luscious phrases, whose real meaning has altogether passed out of them. In such cases the associations connected with the mere sounds are sufficient to render them sacred to the mind. This applies especially to the language of Scripture and of sacred poetry.

CLASS 4.—IDOLS OF THE THEATRE.

§ 26. By the Idols of the Theatre (or, of Theo-

* Bishop Hampden's Bampton Lecture. "The Scholastic Philosophy in its relation to Christian Theology," introd. p. xxviii.

ries, as Bacon* also calls them) are intended those errors of judgment which arise out of devotion to one particular school of thought or denominational creed. There is a fascination in any theory which commends itself to acceptance by its internal consistency, and strikes the imagination by the completeness of its outline. The spirit of system is essentially eclectic in its method of procedure. It is satisfied with simplicity, and passes by all that cannot be fitted into its theory. It takes just what suits its purpose. It feels no remorse in throwing away residual matter, or in treating it as a troublesome incumbrance. Strength of conviction, and clearness of conception, it regards as of more value than agreement with objective reality or matter of fact; and (what is still worse) it looks upon its own theory as the limit beyond which no truth remains to be discovered, and feels resentment towards any who try to pass beyond it. The result is, that just as in the drama the delineations of the poet on the stage are more consistent, more elegant, and better suited to gratify the taste, than are narratives taken from real life, so these theories of the schools will appear more orderly and satisfying to the mind than the complex and less manageable facts of catholic truth.

§ 27. Schools of thought have most frequently arisen under the shelter of superior minds, and are associated with their names. Plato and Aristotle, among the Greeks; Paul and Cephias, in the early

* "Novum Organum," book i. aph. 62.

Christian Church ; and Luther and Calvin, in more recent times, are examples of this tendency. Men go in streams, and follow those who can be eyes to them and ears to them. The influence of the master creates a coloured atmosphere through which the disciple sees all the objects of belief. The idolatry of the theory then takes a personal form, becomes a hero-worship, and the mind of the devotee becomes less anxious for the truth than for the glory of the master. In such cases men seem to act upon the advice :—

“ If you will have a certain clue
To thread the theologic maze,
Hear only one, and swear to every word he says.”—FAUST.

§ 28. And then, most religious sects have their own creed, and to this all their adherents are expected to submit, as the “ terms of communion.” The earnest partisan finds his point of honour in loyalty to his Church. He becomes a sort of religious Caleb Balderstone. His first duty is to uphold the honour of his party. Having once accepted the articles of belief, it becomes a sacred obligation with him to discredit all opposing facts. Although many texts may be found which his theory cannot account for, but which are of equal authority with those he accepts, he either overlooks them as unimportant, or else seeks to wrest them from their true significance, as hostile to the cause he holds sacred. Truth itself is regarded as immoral when it threatens the stability of the idol of his worship.

§ 29. Such an idolatry of names and creeds would not have prevailed so widely in the Church if all Christian teachers had acted in the spirit of the following extract. It is taken from the address of John Robinson, the pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers, when they were about to set out from Holland, in the year 1620 :—" I charge you, before God and His blessed angels, that you follow me no further than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ. If God reveal anything to you by any other instrument of His, be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth by my ministry ; for I am persuaded the Lord hath more truth yet to break forth out of His holy Word. For my part, I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed Churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will go at present no further than the instruments of their reformation. The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw ; whatever part of His will our God has revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it ; and the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things. This is a misery much to be lamented, for though they were burning and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God, but, were they now living, would be as willing to embrace further light as that which they first received. I beseech you, remember it is an article of your Church covenant that you be ready to receive whatever truth

shall be made known to you from the written Word of God.”*

§ 30. The tendencies of human nature, out of which those various illusions arise, and which have been passing under review in this chapter, are not evil in themselves. They all have their use in our spiritual constitution. They result in mischief only when we lose the sense of our responsibility for the use we make of them. A true submission of all our powers to God will save us from the idolatry of the unrenewed instincts of our own spiritual nature. It is our prerogative to be masters of them, and this mastery we can only acquire by becoming ourselves the servants of God.

§ 31. This chapter may be appropriately closed with the words of Bacon: “We have now treated of the various kinds of idols and their qualities, all which must be abjured and renounced with firm and solemn resolution, and the understanding must be completely freed and cleared of them, so that the access to the kingdom of man, which is founded on the sciences, may resemble that to the Kingdom of Heaven, where no admission is conceded except to children.” †

* Neal's “History of the Puritans,” vol. i. p. 477.

† “Novum Organum,” book i. aph. 68.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF INTELLECTUAL AUTHORITY.

§ 1. IN the Ethics of Inductive Inquiry, no question is of greater interest than that which relates to the nature and limits of human Authority, and the moral attitude we ought to assume towards it. It is to this question that the present chapter will be devoted.

§ 2. If Christian inquiry consisted, as is often supposed, in nothing but the investigation of human opinions and opposing theories of Christian doctrine, so as to enable us to determine on which side, in religious controversy, the truth is to be found, there would be as little prospect of success in the future as there has been in the past. The mill-horse would still have to pace his endless round, while the same problems would present themselves afresh to every succeeding generation. But Christian inquiry, as conducted on the inductive method, is nothing of the kind. It is something essentially different from this. It consists, as we have seen, in the study of the Christian facts themselves, for the purpose of discovering the great doctrinal principles revealed in them. Such an appeal to facts for the establishment of

general truths involves an apparent contempt for the prevailing dogmas of theology. This is the reason why the "abjuration of human authority" has been regarded as "the first principle of Lord Bacon's philosophy, and the preparation for his logic." *

§ 3. But the abjuration of human authority, even when the expression is properly understood, is only one side of the first principle of Bacon's method, and that the negative side. Inductive inquiry is essentially constructive. Its denials are directed exclusively against the hindrances of knowledge. When it is applied to the gospel it seeks to interpret the Christian facts, and it requires an absolute submission of mind to the teaching of the facts. The facts are the authority to which the intellect yields, as distinguished from the pious thoughts and assertions of human interpreters. Such submission to facts is the glory of the inductive method, and reason, so far from being depraved by rendering it, finds in it its truest freedom. This side of the first principle of the inductive method finds expression in the words of Bacon, that "nature can only be subdued by obedience."† So that when this method is employed, facts become the ground of theories, the objective limits the subjective, the actual controls the ideal, and formal logic, instead of ignoring concrete reality, becomes an instrument

* Hallam's "History of the Literature of Europe," vol. ii. p. 407. First edition.

† "Natura non nisi parendo vincitur."—"Nov. Org." book i. aph. 8.

and measure by which to ascertain its exact limits and value.

§ 4. Such submission does not mean the bending of reason, but such a use of reason as to make it subservient to our ascertaining with ever increasing exactness what the facts really are, as distinguished from what they roughly seem to us on first inspection. It is the healthiest eye that sees best what comes within the range of vision, and not the eye diseased and jaundiced. The mind has its ideal standards, the value of which, as aids to determine the actual measure of facts, depends upon their being guarded with a care as jealous as that which is bestowed upon the standard weights and measures of a nation's commerce. A Lesbian rule, which can be bent into any form we like, is utterly useless to determine the actual facts of a true measurement. Reason is subject to facts only as a chronometer is subject to the time it has to measure: it has to determine exactly what it really is, not to alter it. When rightly used, reason does not create reality, but enables us to ascertain it and submit to it. But, in order to do this, there must be an unbending fidelity to the laws of reason. False facts, or facts falsely or only partially conceived, must result from the use of false standards of measurement.

SECTION 1.—OF LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY.

§ 5. When it is said that the abjuration of human authority is the first principle of the in-

ductive method, it is of great importance for us to understand that the word "authority" is used in a special, and even technical sense, more especially as it is claimed by the Church of Rome. There are many forms of human authority which minister very largely to the progress of society, and which are even essential to its existence. These forms of authority we are bound to accept. To abjure them, would be to sin against God and the social order. Let us see what these are.

§. 6. There is, for example, the authority of human government, both civil and ecclesiastical. This we are not at liberty to reject. The conditions of social life are only possible where such authority is submitted to. St Paul says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. . . . Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."* Thus rebellion against human authority is regarded as a sin against the Divine order. But then this authority extends only to the outward conduct and endurance of men. Obedience is all that is exacted: belief and approval must be left free. Practical life is urgent, and cannot wait for the solution of all the problems of social science before it proceeds to act. To be law-abiding is not inconsistent with doubt as to the wisdom and

* Rom. xiii. 1-5.

infallibility of the legislative authority, or with the constant endeavour to modify law in accordance with the growing intelligence of society.*

§ 7. Nor, by the abjuration of human authority, is it meant to call in question the provisional authority of parents in the education of their children, and of teachers in the early training of pupils for professional life. Induction is the method of discovery—not the method of instruction—and it is often very slow in its progress, but the results of discovery can be promptly communicated to other minds. Principles which, in the order of discovery, come out last, may be given to others as first truths, from which they may take their departure, and which they may bring into practical use, as working principles, in real life. Every branch of knowledge has its text-books, and these may in all cases be used as authorities, but only as representing the accepted doctrines of science which are, year by year, subject to restatement,

* Dogmatic Infallibility and Governmental Supremacy are ideas so distinct, especially under the self-corrective order of modern political life, that it is not easy to see how any one could confound the two. And yet this is the fallacy which pervades Joseph de Maistre's great work on the Papacy. He says: "*L'infailibilité* dans l'ordre spirituel, et la *souveraineté* dans l'ordre temporel, sont deux mots parfaitement synonymes. L'un et l'autre expriment cette haute puissance qui les domine toutes, dont toutes les autres dérivent, qui gouverne et n'est pas gouvernée, qui juge et n'est pas jugée. Quand nous disons que *Eglise est infailible*, nous ne demandons pour elle, il est bien essentiel de l'observer, aucun privilège particulier, nous demandons seulement qu'elle jouisse du droit commun à toutes les souverainetés possibles qui toutes agissent nécessaire comme infailibles; car tout gouvernement est absolu; et du moment où l'on peut lui résister sous prétexte d'erreur ou d'injustice, il n'existe plus.—"Du Pape," book i. ch. 1.

as discovery advances. "And, therefore," to use the words of Bacon, "although the position be good, 'Oportet discentem credere,' yet it must be coupled with this, 'Oportet edoctum judicare;'" for disciples do owe unto masters only a temporary belief, and a suspension of their own judgment till they are fully instructed, and not an absolute resignation or perpetual captivity; and, therefore, so let great authors have their due, as time, which is the author of authors, be not deprived of his due, which is farther and farther to discover truth."*

§ 8. And besides the Authority of Teachers, there is the Authority (not less valid) of the great Discoverers and leaders of thought. Such men have a right to claim the utmost deference and respect from their less instructed fellows, in their own chosen departments of investigation. Everybody is prepared, within certain limits, to accept the maxim, "*Cuique in suâ arte credendum.*" It is only when such men, or others on their behalf, set up a claim to infallibility from which there is no appeal, that there is any disposition to resist their authority. In real life such a claim almost always arises from ignorance or conceit or personal ambition. Those who are truly learned are always most conscious of their own limitations, and are most ready, without affectation, to confess their ignorance. Besides, great men can only give us what they have; and "as water," to use Bacon's words, "will not ascend higher than the first

* Bacon's "Advancement of Learning," book i.

spring-head from whence it descendeth, so knowledge derived from Aristotle, and exempted from liberty of examination, will not rise again higher than the knowledge of Aristotle." *

§ 9. And, finally, what is called the Authority of Witnesses is a legitimate authority. The utmost caution is to be exercised in determining the veracity of informants; but it is no part of the Baconian philosophy to declare that "all men are liars," and that the recorded experience of the past is unworthy of belief. Men who profess to have heard words spoken, claims advanced, motives assigned, commands issued, explanations given; to have seen deeds done, and sufferings endured; who have borne witness to anything which may be called a matter of fact: such men have a right, under the conditions which determine the laws of evidence, to be regarded as witnesses of truth; although, whilst receiving their facts, we refuse to accept their opinions as to the interpretation of them.

SECTION 2.—INFALLIBLE DOGMATIC AUTHORITY.

§ 10. The human authority which the inductive method teaches us to abjure, as a condition of our restoration to the Christian facts, is the dogmatic authority which is formally claimed by the Church of Rome; and which is employed in giving a character of finality to the scientific definitions of theology, and in enforcing those definitions upon

* Bacon's "Advancement of Learning," book i.

the faith of mankind as the eternal truths of God. In order to render this claim logically valid, that Church assumes her own infallibility. Grant the infallibility, and the dogmatic authority must be accepted as a matter of course. The singular result is, that she risks her whole being upon every word she utters. She makes herself answerable with her life for every decree she passes. To be detected in a single error, is to forfeit the entire confidence of her children. But if she is willing to stake all upon such a logical issue, they, too, must accept, on their side, a similar risk. For them to question any one of her interpretations, is not merely to open afresh a question of Christian science; but, if Vaticanism be true, it involves a violation of a fundamental principle of Christian ethics. To appeal again to any of Christ's sayings, or to any fact recorded in the Gospels, when she has once pronounced upon their meaning, implies a revolt of the intellect against the whole principle of authoritative interpretation. The question as to the true meaning of the Christian facts sinks into insignificance in presence of the far graver question of the infallibility of the authority which it cannot help bringing into view.

§ 11. Such a claim is essentially barbaric. It belongs to that old world state of Intellectual Ethics which is typified in "the laws of the Medes and Persians, which changed not." The majesty of a ruling will, especially when united to a severe logical consistency, is regarded, at such a stage of

mental progress, as a sufficient ground for the authority of any principle of religious belief. Like other great moral forces which have held sway over mankind, and which have been superseded in the course of human emancipation, this principle of authority may have done some good service in the world. That it has exercised an immense repressive power cannot be denied ; and in the absence of any higher principle of intellectual ethics, it may have been a valuable antagonist to the turbulent and self-willed rebellion of the human mind.

§ 12. Some such office is still claimed for it by its advocates. "Supposing it to be the will of the Creator," says Dr. Newman, "to interfere in human affairs, and to make provisions for retaining in the world a knowledge of Himself, so definite and distinct as to be proof against the energy of human scepticism, in such a case—I am far from saying there was no other way—but there is nothing to surprise the mind if He should think fit to introduce a power into the world, invested with the prerogative of infallibility in religious matters. Such a provision would be a direct, immediate, active, and prompt means of withstanding the difficulty ; it would be an instrument suited to the need ; and when I find that this is the very claim of the Catholic Church, not only do I feel no difficulty in admitting the idea, but there is a fitness in it which recommends it to my mind. And thus I am brought to speak of the Church's infallibility as a provision, adapted by the mercy of the Creator,

to preserve religion in the world, and to restrain that freedom of thought which of course, in itself, is one of the greatest of our natural gifts, and to rescue it from its own suicidal excesses. . . . I say, that a power possessed of infallibility in religious teaching is happily adapted to be a working instrument, in the course of human affairs, for smiting hard and throwing back the immense energy of the aggressive, capricious, untrustworthy intellect.*

§ 13. But the attempts thus made to restrain the excesses of licentious thought and of wild departure from the realities of God, by the severity of infallible dogmatic authority, have, at least in modern times, become quite inadequate even for the purposes of repression. The story of its failure reminds us of the method taken with the demoniac in the Gospel, of whom we read that "oftentimes the unclean spirit had caught him, and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness."† This is a sad picture of human nature;

* "History of my Religious Opinions."—Newman, p. 245. "The Romanists say it is best for men, and so suitable to the goodness of God, that there should be an infallible judge of controversies on earth, and therefore there is one. And I, by the same reason, say it is better for man that every man himself should be infallible. I leave them to consider whether by the force of this argument they should think that every man is so. I think it a very good argument to say the infinitely wise God hath made it so, and therefore it is best. But it seems to me a little too much confidence in our own wisdom to say, 'I think it best, and therefore God hath made it so;' and in the matter in hand it will be in vain to argue from such a topic that God hath done so, when certain experience shows us that He hath not."—Locke's "Essay on Human Understanding," book i. ch. 4, § 12.

† Luke viii. 29.

but those who then undertook its treatment knew no better way of dealing with this terrible brother. There is a better way, notwithstanding. The wild man saw the face of Jesus and felt His healing grace. And so "when the people of the city came, they found the man out of whom the devils were departed sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind."* This method of liberty, as contrasted with the method of repression, is the Christian method of dealing with the "wild energy of human scepticism." It has been too often assumed that the only alternative lies between Infallible Authority and Rationalism. It is said, Reject the infallibility of the Church, and you will find no supernatural basis for Christianity. The reply is that the Facts of the Gospel are themselves the supernatural basis of Christianity, and that the inductive method of interpreting those facts, by bringing the mind face to face with Christ, is a distinct alternative to the method of infallible authority.

§ 14. The liberty we receive in Christ, is not the liberty of "thinking as we like," or of "believing what we please." We are no more endowed with the right of making our own truths than we are of making our own gods. To look into Christ's face each one for himself, instead of looking at Him through the eyes of other men—this is the privilege which Christ gives us. And this privilege we accept with all its attendant duties and risks, in order that our knowledge of Christ may increasingly corres-

* Luke viii. 35.

pond with the deep reality of Christ. This is the only true intellectual submission. Inquiry is never so free as when it submits itself wholly to the limits and truth of things ; and Christian facts are no more a restraint upon the liberty of Christian thought, than the wide heaven is a restraint upon the free flight of the bird, although the limits of the atmosphere bound its range. Such a submission to the truth of facts (be that truth what it may) is the highest homage which the intellect can pay to the God of truth and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

§ 15. Men cling to dogmatic infallibility, not so much out of a simple love of truth, as from a desire to secure from invasion the human beliefs which they have inherited from the past. Their feelings may be traced (to use the words of Dr. Arnold) "to that natural but most deadly error of human indolence and corruption, that our business is to preserve, not to improve." When new truths are brought to light, revealing defects in the ancient creeds, either they are denied to be truths, or else they are suppressed as unfriendly to the interest of the Church, because the Church is dearer to them than the Truth itself. This is the ground of that reproach which Mr. Lecky brings against a large class of religious men. "The love of Truth," he says, "is a virtue which has been retarded unna-

* "Faith, in the language of the apostle, is almost synonymous with freedom. The quality in us, which in reference to God is faith, in reference to ourselves and our fellow-men is Christian liberty."—Jowett on the Epistles of St. Paul, vol. ii. p. 457.

turally by the opposition of theologians, who, while exercising a very beneficial influence in many spheres of morals, have in this proved very formidable enemies of progress: for they made it during many centuries a main object to suppress all writings opposed to their views, and when this power escaped their grasp, they proceeded to discourage, in every way, impartiality of mind and judgment, and to associate it with the notion of sin." *

§ 16. This reproach has not been undeserved. Theologians have for the most part been pious and honest men, thoroughly faithful to their conscientious convictions. The world owes more than it knows to their courage, their self-sacrifice, their willingness to endure worldly losses and even a painful death. Such men have been the leaders of intellectual emancipation;† even though, after breaking away from authority themselves, on the plea of conscience, they have been ready to forge theological shackles for the minds of other men. If to trace an error to its source is to refute it, then the error of these men is not hard to detect. It consisted in mistaking their own subjective convictions for objective truth: and so, of confounding fidelity to conscience with fidelity to

* Lecky's "History of Morals," vol. i. p. 146.

† "The stern zeal of the Reformers, however unenlightened, was a higher thing than the liberalism that was tolerant of all opinions, because it had no real faith in truth, or at least in its attainableness by man. Such tolerance has no righteous root, and therefore easily passes into intolerance."—McL. Campbell on Revelation, p. 47.

the truth. Fidelity to conscience has a right to all the sacrifices which have been made on its behalf. It is nearly the greatest intellectual virtue which men can exercise. There is, perhaps, only one that is superior to it, and that is fidelity to the truth. This distinction has been too often overlooked. Conscience has then been made the measure of the truth, and has been erected into an infallible standard of orthodoxy, to which all are expected to yield, and disagreement with which has been treated as criminal. And in this way authority has been claimed, by good men, for human dogmas, as if they were the eternal truths of God. It only needs to be seen that the Christian facts are more catholic than the creeds of the Church, and that there is a great deal more Christianity in Christ than has yet passed into the scientific definitions of theology, to enable us, without doing injury to conscience, to admit that, however strong our convictions may be, the human conscience is not the limit of God's eternal truth.

§ 17. It may, perhaps, be said, that it is the conscience, or consciousness, of the Church that is infallible, not that of the individual; and that this infallibility is secured by the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit. In answer to this, I am earnest to avow my belief that the Holy Spirit has been given, and has never been retracted, and that He is, moreover, the efficient cause of all holy life and all true theology. This I most firmly believe as a matter of fact. But what I find it needful also to avow is, 1st, That

this gift is bestowed upon individual believers, as really as upon the Church ; and, 2nd, That it is, in both cases alike, bestowed under conditions of moral responsibility—as conferring intuition, not infallibility. Both may abuse the gift, and “do despite unto the spirit of grace.” Mysticism may, in both cases, convert what is really an “inward light,” kindled by the Spirit of God, into an infallible standard of objective truth. The Spirit’s influence, moreover, in His saving work, so blends with the activity of our own minds, that the results of His operation are ever human as well as Divine. We may be ready, in our moments of spiritual exaltation and of self-renunciation, to ascribe the whole operation to God, and to say, “Thou hast wrought all our works in us.” But if we allow this devout confession to take the place of a logical definition, we may find ourselves treating it as the major premise of a syllogism which leads to the false conclusion—false in fact, however true in logic—that our vivid convictions have all the authority of an infallible, Divine revelation. The corporate character of the Church does not alter the moral conditions of the problem.

§ 18. But even supposing, for the sake of argument, that this inward light of the Holy Spirit is to be regarded as equivalent to infallibility, and not merely to that kind of moral guidance which is so much better adapted to our need, there would still be a vast difficulty in the way of its practical use. The gift is enjoyed in common by all true believers

and all true Churches, inasmuch as all true Christian life is the fruit of the Spirit's operation. But the family of Christ is divided into contending schools, holding some doctrines essentially opposed to one another—each regarding itself as the true Church, and its own creed as the standard of orthodoxy. The zealous adherents of each sect may be satisfied with such a condition of things, but the great world outside, in its poor bewildered way, looks upon a spectacle in which infallibility contends with infallibility, orthodoxy fights with orthodoxy, and strong conviction strives for the mastery over conviction equally strong, without any prospect of reconciliation. Amidst such discordant claims, it would require infallible guidance to enable men to find out where infallibility exists.

§ 19. The Church of Rome cannot even vindicate her claim to be the authorised keeper of Holy Writ. As a simple matter of fact, the original documents which make up the New Testament are lost beyond recovery. Had the Church of Rome, with its unbroken historical continuity, been entrusted with such an office, and had this fact been present to her infallible consciousness from the very first, she would have fulfilled her duty by collecting and preserving the autographs of the apostles and evangelists. No such thought seems to have come to her till the opportunity was gone, and the precious writings had disappeared from human eyes. She is not even able to produce the original letter which St. Paul had addressed to her own members. It

is, moreover, through no care of hers that the most ancient manuscripts which actually remain have been preserved from destruction. They have been brought to light from obscure places beyond her pale. So far as this great inheritance is concerned, we should probably have been no poorer, had the Church of Rome taken no part at all in securing it for posterity. As to the Old Testament, God has given its custody into other keeping than that of Rome. The Jews are, according to St. Paul, honoured "chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." *

SECTION 3.—THE METHOD OF DIVINE TEACHING.

§ 20. In contrast with this barbaric claim of infallible dogmatic authority, we have now to bring into view the Divine method of grace. There is none that teacheth like God. And His method combines the highest authority with the greatest freedom of investigation. He gives us the truth about a thing in the thing itself, and in the relation it bears to other things; and then leaves us to search for the truth where He has put it, and not somewhere else. He does nothing for us that it is good for us to do for ourselves, although it may cost us much trouble and some mistakes to do it. Accordingly, His method is not theological and scientific, but indirect and mediatorial. By the great gift of His Holy Spirit, He effectually produces in us those moral and spiritual dispositions which fit us

* Rom. iii. 2.

to perceive the truth ; but in this, He does not supersede our own mental activity, nor treat with contempt those laws of our mental constitution which He has Himself ordained. Such, at least, is the ordinary and disciplinary method in which God teaches His children ; and there is no question here about the possibility of direct inspiration, such as that by which the ancient prophets were qualified to reveal the truth of God. "There are," says Hooker, "but two ways whereby the Spirit leadeth men into all truth : the one extraordinary, the other common ; the one belonging but unto few, the other extending itself unto all that are of God ; the one, that which we call by a special Divine excellency, Revelation ; the other, Reason."

§ 21. Before the coming of Christ there was one great exception to this method. God did speak to the people, in peremptory words, on Mount Sinai, and in such a manner as to furnish an answer to those men who think that direct communication would end the controversy between God and man. They say, "If God really wishes us to believe and to be saved, why does He not speak plainly from heaven, and tell us exactly what we are to do ? We should then have absolute certainty to rest upon at least, whether we chose to act upon it or not." In this way men, ignorant of the laws of their own nature, and still more ignorant of the real problem of salvation, have represented the matter to themselves. They have even argued that the craving for dogmatic certainty is so

genuine a longing of the human mind, that the very voice of reason bids men believe that God must have made provision, in the infallibility of the Pope, for its relief and satisfaction, just as He has provided bread for our hunger. But they forget that bread is as really the product of human labour as it is of Divine bestowment. When God gave the law on Sinai He revealed, once for all, the weakness and insufficiency of such a method of direct revelation of great principles to the human mind. The slower and more laborious method is the best for us. There is no way of shortening the process. It was not for the salvation of the world that He made the experiment, but to show us that not in this way could the world be saved. It is not because He cannot, but because it is not profitable for us, that He does not always employ dogmatic utterance to draw the mind to Himself. In the region of the intellect, mere verbal dogma, to be received on the authority of the speaker, is just like mere verbal law in the region of the will, to be literally obeyed ; and in both cases salvation, so far forth, at least, as it is an intellectual and spiritual process, and not merely physical and external, is arrested instead of being promoted by dogmatic inculcation.* God's law is not arbitrary law—it

* "Without infallibility, dogmatic inculcation would be at once arrogant and mischievous ; but, even with infallibility, it would not be justifiable, because, although on this supposition the conclusions piled up in the understanding should be true, the faculties would be injured by the process ; the truths would lie lifeless in the memory ; and there would be no security against the future intrusion of falsehood."—Bailey on the Pursuit of Truth p. 122.

is truth as well as command, and love as well as truth: it is not the expression of mere personal will. And to meet it with mere blind, unloving submission, is to offer nothing but arbitrary will to meet what is so much more than the expression of will. The bare act of literal obedience does not fulfil the Divine command, but only one element of it. Till we share the truth and the love, as well as the will, which enter into it, we cannot truly obey the law of God. Mere arbitrary will and verbal truth have absolutely no existence in God, and can have no saving influence on man.

§ 22. There is, perhaps, no single fact in the whole range of our intellectual (as distinguished from our spiritual) experience, more obvious than the Personal Reserve of God; and there is no single fact that has in it a deeper mystery, and that promises, if ever it comes to be properly understood, to throw more light upon the ways of God with man. Who of us has not again and again taken the words of the great prophet as His own? "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour."* That God might reveal Himself in such a way as to end all the variations of human creeds, if that were our greatest want, no believer in the Bible will doubt. There is also before us the certainty of the beatific vision, when "the pure in heart shall see God" as they cannot see Him now. But, in the mean time, the Divine government takes altogether an indirect and

* Isa. xlv. 15.

mediatorial character. Personal authority is nowhere directly asserted. The very increase of intellectual activity and of clear insight into the laws of nature seems to put the personal authority of God further away from us. Under scientific investigation, the world revolves itself into principles, laws, elements, and forces, and God seems to retire from our view. We are impatient of such a result, because we so imperfectly understand its disciplinary use. We long for the luxury of immediate rest, instead of labouring to enter into the promised land by that long pilgrimage, which seems ever to beckon us more deeply into the wilderness. But easy knowledge is not the best for us, and it is certainly no part of God's plan of salvation, to release us from the necessity of intellectual labour. In spiritual things, no less than in things of this world, it is true that "if any man will not work, neither shall he eat."

§ 23. Of the mediatorial function of the material world, as a vehicle of Divine ideas, I have spoken in an earlier part of this essay. (See p. 47.) We there saw that every creature is the product of the mind of God, and not merely of physical causation. I will now observe that this is why no chemical analysis, however perfect, can discover in the material world that subtle essence which makes it what it is and what it is ever more and more becoming to the growing mind of man; just as no mere chemical analysis, dealing with the ink and paper I am now using, can detect the thought which I am express-

ing at this moment by their means. The elemental atoms of the outward world are the alphabet which God arranges and combines according to definite laws of Divine thought; and then He invites us to share those thoughts by earnest study, and "the works of the Lord are sought out of all those who have pleasure therein." Accordingly, one of the greatest of our modern teachers has given us the following profound instruction as to the method of inquiry:—"We must never forget that it is principles, not phenomena—the interpretation, not the mere knowledge of facts—which are the objects of inquiry to the natural philosopher. And as truth is single, and consistent with itself, a principle may be as completely and as plainly elucidated by the most familiar and simple fact as by the most imposing and uncommon phenomenon. The colours which flitter on a soap bubble are the immediate consequence of a principle the most important from the variety of phenomena it explains, and the most beautiful, from its simplicity and compendious neatness, in the whole science of optics. . . . To the natural philosopher there is no natural object unimportant or trifling. From the least of Nature's works he may learn the greatest lessons. The fall of an apple to the ground may raise his thoughts to the laws which govern the revolutions of the planets in their orbits; or the situation of a pebble may afford him evidence of the state of the globe he inhabits, myriads of ages ago, before his species became its denizens."*

* Herschel's "Introduction to the Study of Natural Philosophy," p. 14.

§ 24. Our Lord's personal ministry, to a very great extent, partook of a like mediatorial character. The great principles which He came into the world to establish were embodied acts which symbolised thought rather than expressed it. He offered Himself, and not a dogmatic creed about Himself, as the object of our faith. Only to a very limited extent, and then under the exigencies of occasion, did He attempt to give an intellectual equivalent of His own mysterious personality, or of the atonement which He came to accomplish. Everything He did had a meaning, and proceeded upon determinate principles of eternal truth and righteousness; but He was concerned to get His work done, and then to leave men, in after ages under the teaching of His Spirit, to discover its full significance. Once done, His work marked the level to which human destiny must some day rise. There was plenty of time afterwards for the actual attainment of that level. To much more than to the washing of His disciples' feet—perhaps to everything besides—may be applied the words which He addressed to Peter: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."*

§ 25. And if we pass from our Lord's life to His teaching, we find Him resting His claim to our confidence, not on the ground of traditional authority, like the scribes and Pharisees, nor as the recognised interpreter of the religious consciousness of the Church; but as a Supernatural Messenger

* John xiii. 7.

from God and Witness to His Truth. The following are His own words : " He that sent me is true, and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. . . . I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." * " Jesus answered them and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." †

§ 26. And the style of His teaching was altogether the reverse of that which characterises the dogmatic teaching of the Church of Rome. When He declares, " Verily, verily, I say unto you : Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," ‡ He not only offers Himself as the one object of our faith, but He indicates that we cannot receive Him aright unless faith leads to mental activity and to a spiritual assimilation of the aliment supplied. Accordingly, His lessons are purposely intended by their very form to provoke inquiry, to stimulate and even to task thought, and at times, by the appearance of paradox, to force the mind to ask, What can His meaning be? When, for example, we are commanded to pluck out the offending right eye, and to cut off the right hand, and to sell all that we have and give to the poor—(deeds which, it may be said in passing, conscientious men have literally done)—who does not

* John viii. 26.

† Ibid. vii. 16, 17.

‡ Ibid. vi. 53.

feel that the words of the Master, before they can come forth as great ruling principles of a kingdom of God on earth, must pass through some such inductive process as that which has been described in this Essay? And when He says, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple," * we feel that we are in the presence of a style of teaching which, by the very shock it gives to the honest feelings of natural affection, obliges us (if we have any real faith in our Lord's Divine mission) to pause, and, if needful, to spend a lifetime in trying to find out the principle of which, under certain circumstances, such conduct may be the *extreme* example; and which, when discovered, will be found to apply to other and less extreme cases in the Christian life. And if we have not faith in that mission, we shall hardly think it worth while to spend any time at all over teaching which seems so openly opposed to our most spontaneous moral feelings.

§ 27. What I contend for is that these sayings of Christ are to be regarded as "crucial instances" of great spiritual laws, standing as guides at the very deepest exigencies of our life; and that they must therefore be taken at that depth, and not at a more superficial level, before their true reach and significance can be at all understood. Such words ought never to be bandied about in careless debate, but

* Luke xiv. 26.

should be reserved for a last appeal, as between the most sacred claim of all and those claims which are only second in the hierarchy of truth; between claims, therefore, which ought never to come into competition at all. But if that last appeal must come, as it has come to so many, even in the humblest station of life, when to confess Christ has involved the sacrifice of all subordinate duties and the loss of life itself, then father and mother, saints and pastors, our dearest and our holiest, for whom we would gladly die, must, if they persist in coming between us and Christ, even be given up for Him. This is His teaching; and His words lie at the very root of the moral universe, and point to that very stone which God has laid in Zion, upon which the Church rests, and which cannot be touched without shaking the whole fabric of the city of God. It is only when we bear this in mind that we can truly interpret the particular examples in which He saw fit, in His infinite wisdom, to exhibit the principles of His gospel.*

§ 28. Our Lord's ascension into heaven took away from the Church the possibility of an appeal to His personal dogmatic authority, when the exigencies of Christian thought should arise. This is a very significant fact. We may well consider how far the attempt which men have made to supply His place, by creating for themselves an infallible human substitute, is in reality a protest against the wisdom of His departure. But we

* See Appendix.

know that He did not go away till His work was finished. By His earthly life He made His impression on the world. That impression altered for ever the moral condition of humanity. It was latent, but not the less real. It did not lie on the surface. The world went on for a time very much as it did before. But He himself knew that inwardly it was no longer what He had found it. To develop that change, ages have had to pass away. But so far from regarding His personal presence as necessary for superintending the process, He expressly said to His disciples, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth ; It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." * It is not easy to give play to the intellect in the personal presence of a teacher whom we adore as infinitely superior to ourselves. We do not think, while He is near us, of trying to form a judgment for ourselves, or venturing to argue, as we do among our equals, or when we examine facts for ourselves. Our reason is under the fascination of a spell, from which it does not even try to release itself. But submission arising from personal attachment is a very different thing from a submission to truth arising from spiritual insight. This applies to the case of our Lord's disciples. Their spiritual perception of the doctrinal value of His life grew rapidly after His departure. By being left alone with His remembered

* John xvi. 7.

words and actions, and to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, their mental activity was forced to take a new direction. It was a great loss; but what was lost to their affections was a gain to their spiritual growth, and to the advancement of Christian truth in the world.

§ 29. The same indirect and mediatorial character belongs to the Bible. By far the larger part of the sacred volume consists of a record of facts in human life, of things done and spoken by men under various conditions of personal and social relationship, of events which have taken place in the course of the past history of mankind, the full significance of which we are only slowly learning to understand. Even when men are employed to make verbal communication to us in the name of the Lord, they do not attempt to perform the office of dogmatic definition. They were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and their inspiration broke out in poetic expressions, in prophetic utterance, in rebuke, in exhortation; but there is no approach to a philosophical statement of theological truth. The Bible is not a scientific book, only because it is so much more. Science is essentially human; the Bible is more than human. It is a Divine revelation of God, and of humanity under Divine treatment. That revelation is, to a great extent, given in historical facts and utterances; and is capable of being used for scientific purposes, as all facts are. Moreover, we find in the Bible almost every form of literary composition; and each of

these is amenable to its own special laws of interpretation, and gives false results if interpreted on wrong principles. There is poetry and history, type and prophecy, fable and parable, allegory and personation, epistle and biography, general truths of absolute universality, and grotesque facts which, to the impatient and ignorant, will appear as blots and imperfections. In many cases the addition or absence of a single text might have saved many controversies in the Church. There are "the hard sayings" which have alienated the minds of half-hearted believers. And there are the "things hard to be understood," which they that are unlearned and unstable have wrested to their own destruction.

§ 30. The perfection of the Bible consists, not in its conformity to some ideal standard of literal or dogmatic infallibility, but in what is so much more needful for us, in its adaptation, as a Divine instrument, for the special work of unfolding the spiritual life of man. The occasional character of its contents; the indirect manner in which it reaches us, through copies and translations; the various readings found in different copies; its seeming defects, whether scientific, logical, or grammatical; and the real difficulties of its interpretation--these are not matters of chance, in the view of our heavenly Father, without whom not a hair of our head falls to the ground. They all enter into or are subordinated to the end in view. And it is not the least good resulting from them,

that they at least serve the purpose of withdrawing the Divine instrument from the false and idolatrous use to which we are so liable to pervert it—that of regarding the letter of the Bible as a direct and infallible authority. It is an infallible and perfect book ; but its infallibility lies in the certainty of the principles it will yield to the true inquirer, and its perfection consists in its exact adaptation to task and school the soul in the knowledge of salvation.

§ 31. From these various considerations it will appear that the Divine method of teaching is not dogmatic, but indirect ; and we can scarcely avoid the conclusion that it is designed to be a process of moral discipline rather than a mere process of intellectual enlightenment and easy knowledge. And in that case it will be obvious that our progress can only be effected by the use of the method of induction, and not by the inculcation of dogmatic authority.*

SECTION 4.—COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TWO METHODS.

§ 32. I have dwelt at considerable length in the foregoing sections upon the two methods by which the knowledge of Divine truth is acquired by the human mind—the infallible dogmatic method of the Roman Church, and the inductive method which collects the truth from the indirect teaching of facts. There are several points in which these two methods of teaching may now be compared with

* See Appendix.

each other, so as to bring into greater distinctness their respective characteristics.

§ 33. For instance, authoritative dogmatic teaching proceeds upon the assertion of its own infallibility. When it has once delivered its lessons, it resents hesitation and doubt as a grievous sin, and it claims the right to suppress all private inquiry and scientific verification, as a usurpation of functions which it is unlawful for the human reason to exercise. When the Church was able to command the secular arm, it insisted that the State was bound to treat any departure from the authoritative creed as a crime to be punished as it would punish murder or theft. Up to the time of the Reformation, says Sir George Lewis, "every Christian state acted upon the received interpretation of the famous text, *Compelle intrare*, and drove into the fold of the Church all sheep which had either strayed or belonged to any other shepherd. Conformity, exile, or death, were the three alternatives which it presented to the heterodox believer owning its allegiance and resident within its territory."*

§ 34. In striking contrast with this way of exacting the submission of the human mind, we now turn and look at the indirect and mediatorial method which God uses, and we find that He foregoes the direct assertion of personal dogmatic authority. Inquiry and verification are not rebuked by Him as a sinful questioning of dogmatic authority,

* "Essay on the Influence of Authority in Matters of Opinion," by Sir G. C. Lewis, p. 291.

just because no dogmatic authority has ever been asserted. He has purposely avoided putting the question between Himself and us upon the false issue of any scientific definition. And as He has advanced no dogmatic claim, He is not offended when we pause in presence of the Christian facts, and express doubts as to the completeness of our knowledge of them, and as to the desirableness of our seeking a readjustment of thought, so as to bring it more and more into agreement with their deeper meaning. So far from being offended, He has given the facts for the very purpose of having them questioned, and made to yield up to us all they have to give. And this is why, instead of giving us dogmatic creeds for the training of our souls, He gives His lessons "precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little;"* and it is the reason why He is so patient with our slowness, and does "not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, till he send forth judgment unto victory."†

§ 35. Again, authoritative dogmatic teaching excludes the idea of progressive knowledge, or, at least, of the possibility of fresh discoveries of Divine Truth. Its creed is fixed, and admits of no change. Its education is finished; and in claiming to be an *ecclesia docens*, it claims also to be no longer an *ecclesia discens*. Hence it is that every new fact that is brought to light, and does not fall

* Isa. xxviii. 10.

† Matt. xii. 20.

in at once with the received doctrines, is regarded with fear, and any sophistry is welcome that will get rid of it. Infallibility cannot afford to take back the least of its words when they are once uttered.

§ 36. But when, on the other hand, the formation of thought takes place in the presence of facts, every difficulty that arises, if only it is a real difficulty and is not artificially produced, is welcomed as a godsend ; because, although it may disturb existing theories, it gives compensation for the trouble, by pointing to some deeper truth. Such difficulties, to those who have faith in facts, are like the residual phenomena in physical inquiry, or the perturbations in a planet's orbit in astronomy. They come in the form of irregularities and as superfluous things, which will not fit into our system, and cannot be accounted for on any existing hypothesis. But to the believing inquirer these troublesome facts are full of promise, for the very havoc they occasion among received opinions is only a preparation for larger views and more complete knowledge. God's lessons have to grow upon the mind from small beginnings. To use the beautiful expression of the Psalmist, "Light is sown for the righteous ;" and when the light germinates, there is not only growth, but development, "first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear."

§ 37. Again, under the system of infallible dogmatic teaching, prayer (except when it is the spontaneous outcry of the heart under some special sorrow) is (1) in its highest form the indulgence of

devout emotion and the expression of subjective religious ideas. (2) Sometimes it is a laborious effort after a peculiar style of pious feeling. (3) It is often a morbid self-agitation. (4) When the desired emotions neither come spontaneously nor by dint of earnest effort, the aid of external incitements is called in, and prayer becomes very much of a bodily exercise or affecting ritual observance. (5) And finally, in the lowest form, when all feeling has died out, prayer becomes (as among the Buddhists) a mere mechanical process, which may be performed by a lay figure working at a prayer-wheel.

§ 38. But under the Divine method of teaching, prayer, without losing any of its uses of consolation and relief, acquires a new power. It is not only a resource to us in our emotional exigencies, but it is available as an organ of inquiry. Taken into the service of Christ, it becomes a successful means of conducting the search after Divine truth. We learn to seek from God the daily bread for our souls, as well as the daily bread for our bodies. When we throw our minds (as we do in the inductive process) upon objective realities, we cease from trying directly to excite religious emotions: these are left to come and go of themselves. The success of prayer, when so used, becomes evident in the fresh truth we acquire. To possess truth is to possess power, and truth is possessed when we understand it. This is the use of prayer which our Lord teaches us in His words: "Ask, and it

shall be given you : seek, and ye shall find : knock, and it shall be opened unto you : for every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. . . If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him ? ” * A stagnant theology necessarily excludes such a view of prayer as this : it has all its truth already, and has no new truth to seek for. †

§ 39. Only one more comparison will be added. Under the dogmatic teaching of the Roman Church there is a claim upon our submission, but no guarantee is offered for our immunity from risk. The Pope undertakes the responsibility of prescribing our

* Matt. vii. 7-12.

† To some persons it may seem strange if I should speak of the intellectual process by which Newton carried on his researches by the name of prayer ; and yet I think the following words more truly represent the method of successful prayer than that which may be seen every day in the magnificent choir-service as conducted in our great cathedrals. “ It was only by the uninterrupted efforts of solitary and profound meditation that even Newton was able to unfold all the truths he had conceived. We may learn from his example on what severe conditions even the most perfect intellect is able to penetrate deeply into the secrets of nature, and to enlarge the bounds of human attainment. For himself, he well knew and willingly confessed the inevitable necessity of perseverance and constancy in the exercise of his attention in order to develope the power of thought. To one who had asked him on some occasion by what means he had arrived at his discoveries, he replied, ‘ By always thinking unto them. ’ And at another time he thus expressed his method of proceeding. ‘ I keep the subject constantly before me, and wait till the first dawns open slowly, by little and little, into a full clear light. ’ Again in a letter to Dr. Bentley, he says, ‘ If I have done the public any service this way, it is due to nothing but industry and patient thought. ’ ” — Biot’s “ Life of Newton,” p. 19.

creed, whilst he can give us no proof that he also assumes the penalty which responsibility necessarily involves, should there be an error in the case. He puts an end to private inquiry as inconsistent with faith, and yet he can give us no pledge of safety, corresponding to the greatness of the trust he asks.

§ 40. If we now turn to the Divine method, we find that there, also, there is the requirement of faith of the most unqualified character ; but then, with these two differences : first, that it is faith in the person and work of Christ Himself, and not in the Pope or in scientific dogmas of theology ; and, secondly, it is a faith which, instead of prohibiting experiment and inquiry, demands experimental inquiry as its proper fruit. If the risk must after all, and in any case, fall upon ourselves, we have surely a right to make the very best use we can of every faculty which God has given us ; and as salvation consists (in part at least) in the restoration of those faculties themselves from the spiritual corruption to which they have become subject, that treatment must be best which purifies and heals them, and not that which, not knowing how to heal, can only restrain and forbid their exercise ; and in the conscious improvement of character which experience brings, we have the actual earnest of our final inheritance. Heaven begins on earth, and the foretastes of salvation become the best guarantee for its complete fulfilment in the life to come.

CHAPTER IX.

REASON.

§ 1. THE next point that comes into view, in treating of the ethics of Christian inquiry, is that which relates to our behaviour towards our own minds. False views of the true dignity and use of reason, whether on the side of pride or of humility, will inevitably lead to wrong conduct. The reality of the evil will be seen in the intellectual failure which is sure to follow.

§ 2. Our greatest danger lies, perhaps, on the side of undue self-valuation, of thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. Accordingly we find the prophet Isaiah saying, "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight." * St. Paul also has said, "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise." † And again: "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." ‡ We find the advocates of authority making much of this tendency, as if it were sufficient to condemn the use of reason

* Isa. v. 21.

† 1 Cor. iii. 18.

‡ Ibid. viii. 2.

altogether. But if it is said as a reproach that proud and curious reason seeks to know the meaning of things, I answer, Well, and so does humble and docile reason. The offence does not consist in the wish to know, but in the manner in which the wish is carried into effect. This is not only a question of personal morality. We are all members one of another; and any false estimate we form of our own faculties and of their uses will first do injury to ourselves and then to our fellow-men.

§ 3. The renunciation of the infallibility of human authority is a high moral duty, and it involves consequences of very grave import. The individual mind is thereby brought face to face with the Christian facts, and so with Christ Himself. This is a state, when it is first realised, of almost awful interest. It is as in the scene of the Transfiguration, when Moses and Elias had disappeared, "the disciples saw no man, save Jesus only." In taking up such a mental attitude, we have to guard against the temptation to put the infallibility of our individual reason into the place from which the infallibility of authority has been deposed. The safeguard against such a result will be found in the cultivation of a sense of responsibility and a feeling of diffidence. The free use of reason in the inductive handling of the Christian facts is one of the very highest functions of the human mind, and really involves the severest spiritual trial, and therefore a proportionate risk. No one ought to venture upon

it without counting the cost. Intellectual liberty is, in reality, a Divine vocation ; and to undertake it lightly, is to sin against our own souls. Freedom has its privileges, but it has also its duties and its pains ; and it is not easy in the first moment, when we cease to lean upon men for support in matters of Christian belief, to find a fresh adjustment of our mental poise, the centre of which shall be entirely within the base of our own experience.

§ 4. Reason may be regarded as the verifying faculty of the mind. The fact that God has given us a Divine revelation in Christ, implies that we are in possession of an instrument or faculty which fits us, more or less directly, to receive the truth, if the moral conditions of receptivity—the conditions, that is, which are really within the reach of our voluntary acceptance—are duly observed. Without a sufficient capacity to recognise truth, even after we have done all that is morally required of us, the condition of responsibility does not exist. Moral causes, we know to our cost, may interfere with the success of our intellectual efforts ; but we have every reason to believe that our mind itself, as it comes from the hands of God, is an instrument which in honest hands and under due training is perfectly adapted for the work it has to do. But we must not put it to work under false conditions. Every agent acts according to its inherent capacity and its determinate laws, and not otherwise. Strike a flint with a rod of steel and it will give out sparks. Expose a seed to the action of heat and

moisture and it will vegetate. But no collision will bring fire from clay, and no influence of sun and shower will cause a stone to break out in bud and bloom. And even where capacity exists, it may exist in so immature a state, or in connection with conditions of such extreme delicacy of adjustment, that great wisdom will be required to give it a fair chance of success. Should the fountain give its water only drop by drop, we must have patience if we would fill the pitcher ; and we must shelter the weak plant, if we would have it come to its fruiting. All this applies to our mental faculties with perhaps even greater force than to other things in nature.

§ 5. The principal risk supposed to beset the free use of reason in the investigation of Christian truth is Rationalism. The special characteristic of the Rationalist seems to be this, that he fails to use reason under the moral and inductive conditions to which all inquiry into matters of fact is subject. He claims the right to be a judge, as distinguished from an interpreter, of facts ; to decide what the facts ought to be, rather than to explain the facts as they are. His method is subjective, and he will receive nothing as fact that shocks his present sense of what is true and becoming. He makes himself the measure of all things. His "inner consciousness" and "moral sense" are to him, not simply growing percipient faculties of the mind, but the absolute standard of truth and righteousness. He even claims for the voice of his own reason all the certainty of a Divine revelation, and asserts

that to yield to it, is the same thing as to yield to God Himself. To allow the possibility of illusion is, in his view, to suppose that we have been created the victims of falsehood ; that God, in making us so, is a deceiver ; and that the root of our nature is a lie. According to this view, either reason is infallible, or God is false. This is a very lofty conception of human prerogative—if it is only true ; and if it is true we ought to know it, so as to be prepared to pay homage to ourselves accordingly. If it is not true, the system which teaches it must be profoundly immoral, and cannot but be as detrimental to the progress of Christian inquiry as the papal doctrine of infallibility itself.

§ 6. The error which pervades all claims to infallibility, whether advanced in the interest of Authority or of Rationalism, consists in overlooking the fact that, even when under the teaching of the indwelling Spirit of God, we are never released from those moral conditions under which alone our redemption can be accomplished. It consists in regarding the spiritual education of man as an *unmoral* process. As a matter of fact, the human mind is never more truly free than when it is most fully under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Freedom necessarily implies the possibility of resistance, on our part, to the Divine influence. Human reason does not invariably and infallibly answer to the voice of God, as the echo of the mountains repeats the sound which first awakens it. The Holy Ghost is infallible, and will ulti-

mately prevail in the great work of leading the Church into all the truth. This is the promise of Christ to His disciples. But it will be a moral and spiritual triumph. For us to set out in our search for Christian truth with the enormous fallacy (which all experience refutes) that the human reason or the Christian consciousness, whether of the individual or of the collective Church, when under Divine guidance, is absolutely secured from the possibility of mistake, just because the Teacher Himself is infallible, is to create a most effectual hindrance to the Spirit's work ; inasmuch as it gives a character of finality and of authority to the real but incomplete knowledge we may have already reached. Divine teaching is the actual privilege of the Church ; but that teaching is ordinarily carried on not by our being saved from the possibility of error ; but by our being enabled gradually to apprehend the truth by constant self-correction and spiritual growth.

§ 7. A true intellectual morality teaches us that our reason is to be trusted as a verifying faculty, just as, in their respective spheres, we trust our senses, our affections, and our conscience. We do not follow them blindly, as mere instincts ; but under the conditions of moral thoughtfulness and control. Instinctive and automatic functions may be safely left to themselves, but that is not the case with those faculties which are subject to moral regulation. These latter are always liable to error, but then they are always open to correction. It is

these two facts combined which give to our present condition its moral and progressive character. And then it is to be observed, that as we set up on behalf of these various faculties no claim to infallibility, so the occurrence of mistakes never shakes our legitimate confidence in their practical veracity. The occasional errors we commit in the use of them simply produce in us (when we view them aright) a feeling of modesty, and impress on us the duty of greater caution in their use. The denial of the infallibility of reason, therefore, is perfectly consistent with the trusting confidence with which we employ the faculty in the investigation of the Christian facts. To ask us to give up the use of reason because it is not infallible, is very much the same thing as to invite us to give up the use of our eyes because they sometimes mistake the objects upon which they rest, or of our legs, because we sometimes stumble in walking.

§ 8. Even Illusion has its use in our spiritual training. It is, indeed, one of the most powerful instruments in our intellectual and spiritual progress, if only we have skill to use it aright. We may easily be deceived by it; but that can only be the result of our own ignorance, not of the falsehood of facts, far less of the unfaithfulness of God. The illusive phenomena, as they appear to us, are true as phenomena. They appear to us just as they ought to appear in the position we occupy, and the stage of intellectual growth which we have reached. They would be false, in themselves, if they appeared

to us otherwise than they do. As the reality of things grows upon the mind the illusion dies out. But it is to be carefully observed that in this process of disenchantment it is we who change, though we are apt to attribute the change to the objects outside us. If this were properly understood we should not rudely charge God with deceiving us, because He has taught the child to think as a child, and when it becomes a man to put away childish things.* He who gives the illusion gives also the capacity to outgrow it. If we accept the principle of progress, illusion ceases to cast any shade of doubt upon the Divine benevolence and veracity.

§ 9. When the Rationalist tells us to look into the depths of our own consciousness, in order to determine by it, as a verifying faculty, which of the Christian facts are Divine and which are not, he overlooks two very important things in what may be called the natural history of the human mind. The first thing is that which has been spoken of at so much length in the foregoing chapters, namely, that moral causes have at all times largely interfered with the successful use of reason in the investigation of truth. And the second thing is, that even apart from the disturbing influence of moral causes, the reason itself, personal and corporate, needs a long training to fit it to perform its proper office. When it is said that reason is the only test of truth, the question arises,

* 1 Cor. xiii. 11.

"Whose reason, and in what degree of development, and by what helps?" Reason exists in different stages of growth, of experience, and of promptitude of action. The reason of one age and country differs from the reason of another age and country. The faculty may be fundamentally the same in all cases; but it is simply a matter of fact that the reason of a child, a savage, or a ploughboy may be utterly unable to deal with the earliest illusions of the imagination, or the most irrational traditions of the nursery or the country-side. The fact is, the training of the faculty is almost as necessary as the faculty itself. *

§ 10. Physical vision was supposed by the Greek philosophers to be performed by means of rays of light proceeding from the eye of the spectator to the object seen, not from the object to the spectator.† A similar conception seems to exist in some persons with respect to intellectual vision. To the Rationalist, reason is the only revelation. The mind furnishes its own light, and walks in sparks which it has itself kindled.‡ It accepts only what

* This principle is not limited to the conduct of the intellect, it extends to the whole range of Christian experience. As we make fresh advances in the Divine life, the Christian facts reveal themselves under more wonderful aspects. The mind acquires fresh receptivity by fresh discovery. "Jesus," says Bishop Jeremy Taylor, "keeps the best wine till the last, not only because of the direct reservation of the highest joys till the nearer approaches of glory, but also because our relishes are higher after a long fruition than at the first essays; such being the nature of grace, that it increases in relish as it does in fruition, every part of grace being new duty and new reward."—"The Great Exemplar," part ii. sect. 10.

† Whewell's "History of Inductive Science," vol. i. p. 99.

‡ "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, and compass yourselves about

it gives. In Coleridge's "Ode to Dejection" the idea is very clearly expressed :—

"O lady, we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does nature live."

It is perfectly true that we can receive from external reality only what we bring with us a capacity to receive. This is in accordance with a law of mental affinity in universal operation. Only the spiritual can receive spiritual things. "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit." But this is a very different thing from "receiving only what we give." The mind must have objective truth—truth external to itself, or it can never find holding ground in what is changeless and eternal.* If we cast our anchor into the hold of the ship in which we are sailing, instead of throwing it out into the sea, we shall be left to drift about at the mercy of the tide.

§ 11. It is further to be observed that, in ordinary language, the word reason is often used to express a certain standard of judgment arising out of the received doctrines, or the current experience, or (what may be called) the existing common sense

with sparks : walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand ; ye shall lie down in sorrow."—Isa. l. 11.

* "There is no spontaneous creation of light by the healthy eye. To excite vision, the retina must be affected by something coming from without."—Tyndall on the Forms of Water, p. 8. "There is a law well recognised in the science of light and heat, that a body can absorb only the same sort of rays which it is capable of emitting. Just so it is in the moral world."—Dr. Gladstone's "Michael Faraday," p. 65.

of mankind. According to this standard, every proposition is said to be reasonable or unreasonable, according as it agrees or disagrees with what is already accepted by the mind. In the middle ages, for example, when the philosophy of Aristotle was universally received as true, the doctrine of transubstantiation was perfectly rational; but as this doctrine cannot stand the test of the new philosophy, it is said to contradict the reason of men. And so, too, when a few years ago it was agreed that a great European war would never take place again, there was reason, as it appears, but not truth in the anticipation. And, to take another example, it is perfectly reasonable, to-day, to speak of travelling at the rate of fifty miles an hour; but within the memory of many living men nothing would have seemed more irrational. The fact is, the common sense of mankind is not fixed. The growth of knowledge is continually enlarging the horizon of the mind. What once contradicted reason, contradicts it no longer. The impossible becomes the commonplace. Actual experience must always furnish a ground, if not the highest ground, of belief and expectation, but cannot limit either. Experience is always growing, and as fresh facts come into view and fresh possibilities reveal themselves, reason will always be found ready to accept the new condition, and even the new world in which it finds itself placed. The possibility of change is the possibility of salvation for beings in a state of lapse and rebellion against God.

CHAPTER X.

MUTUAL HELP.

§ 1. It has been my object in the two preceding chapters to show that any human claim to infallible dogmatic authority, in the interpretation of the Christian facts, is unwarranted; and that whether it is put forth on behalf of the great Pope at Rome, or on behalf of the smaller pope within our own bosom, we are bound altogether to abjure it as untrue to the peculiar character of our moral relations to Christ, and hostile to the progress of inductive inquiry.

§ 2. But the moment we change the question from human infallibility to human help, and ask how far we can profit by the superior wisdom and learning of our fellows, quite another scale of comparison comes into use. When men claim infallibility they are usurping a Divine prerogative; and by the very act they challenge, in that particular matter, to be measured by a Divine scale, and so they sink into utter littleness, a mere speck in infinite space. But when the mind is withdrawn from so vast a claim, and we are able to view men upon the level of humanity; as wise, though not omniscient; as capable at all times of reaching

increasing degrees of certainty, though never freed from possibilities of present failure ; then the speck bulks out into importance, and there comes into view the most wonderful variety of gifts and attainments, all of which may be made subservient to the progress of Christian inquiry and the advancement of human salvation. The difference is like that which may be seen in the photographic spot on a glass slide, which to the unassisted eye appears no larger than a pin's head ; but which, when placed under the microscope, bursts into a hundred distinct portraits, each having its own characteristic features. It is only when men go out of their own sphere, and challenge from us the homage which is due to God alone, that they forfeit the privilege of being the helpers of their brethren, and become, instead, their tempters and their hinderers, bringing upon them blight and barrenness. This the prophet saw when he wrote the words : " Thus saith the Lord ; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh ; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited." And this spiritual sterility is placed in contrast with the fruitfulness which springs from a true loyalty to God : " Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when

heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green ; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." *

§ 3. But we only truly exercise our dependence upon God when we conform to God's method, and avail ourselves of all the helps which God has provided for us ; and among these, the chief helper of man is his fellow-man. In the work of Christian inquiry, just as in other departments of activity, no one can afford to stand alone. One great mind here and there, like Descartes, may " hold private judgment upon the hard condition of taking nothing upon trust, of passing by at the outset of his mental life the whole preceding education of the world, of owning no debt to those who have gone before them without a regular process of proof ; in a word, of beginning anew, each man for himself." † But

* Jer. xvii. 5-8. " Forasmuch as . . . their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men : therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people : . . . for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."—Isa. xxix. 14.

† " It may be objected [to the investigation into the relation between names and the things signified by them] that the meaning of names can guide us at most only to the opinions, possibly the foolish and groundless opinions, which mankind have formed concerning things ; and that as the object of philosophy is truth, not opinion, the philosopher should dismiss words and look into things themselves, to ascertain what questions can be asked and answered in regard to them. This advice (which fortunately no one has it in his power to follow) is in reality an exhortation to discard the whole fruits of the labours of his predecessors, and demean himself as if he were the first person who had ever turned an inquiring eye upon nature. What does any one's personal knowledge of things amount to, after abstracting all which he has acquired by means of the words of other people ? Even after he has learnt as much as men usually do learn from others, will the notions of things contained in his individual mind afford as sufficient a basis for a *catalogue raisonné* as the notions which are in the minds of all mankind."—Mill's " Logic," vol. i. p. 24.

then, like Descartes, true genius must first master the past before it can properly be said to pass it by or to reform it. And as for the multitude, it would be simply ludicrous to suppose that private inquiry meant the renunciation (not only of human infallibility, but) of human aid. It seems like a wilful caricature to represent private inquiry as the single-handed attempt of each man, without the assistance of the scholarship and experience of others, to pick out of the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible a religion for himself, according to his own taste. This would be as feasible as for men to grow up without parents and companions. In this world, and most where freedom is best understood, we must live in a state of mutual dependence and brotherhood; the gifted few for the many, and the many for the few. Christianity sanctifies, and does not abrogate, this condition of social life. The laws of Christ's kingdom began to emerge in obscure forms long before His advent to the world; and among them is one which may be traced in the incident related in the early life of David, before he came to the throne. "Then said David, . . . As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day." *

§ 4. If we go back to the beginning, we find, as a matter of fact, that the very conditions of our

* 1 Sam. xxx. 24, 25.

early life leave no choice to any of us, even to the greatest philosopher, as to our first intellectual relations to those around us. The Family is as Divine, and even a more Catholic institution than the Church. We have to learn, in the first instance, to look at everything in the light in which our parents and teachers and brothers and sisters regard them. For the time, we believe what they believe; we use their speech, we see with their eyes, and hear with their ears; we hope and fear, and love and hate, and pray and profess as we are taught. Few of us have, perhaps, sufficiently considered the extent to which our education was carried before the awakening of our reflex consciousness, and to what an extent it even anticipated our birth. And by no effort of our own, in after life, can we wholly undo what has been done for us, however much we may try to do so, and were it desirable to do it. Nature itself, indeed, teaches us that the principle of inheritance is legitimate and necessary. The solitary case of Caspar Hauser reveals to us how pitiable and helpless is the condition of a human creature left to pass through infancy and childhood wholly cut off from all human intercourse.

. § 5. There is a proverb which says that "the dwarf upon the giant's shoulder can see farther than the giant himself." We are not greater than our fathers, either in intellect or in piety, and yet we occupy a higher place and a richer inheritance than they. "Among them that are born of woman

there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." This is a Divine law. We have not each to begin afresh, but we take up the work where others leave it, and sometimes we correct their mistakes and improve their methods. We take our start far along in the line of a spiritual progress which had its beginning long before we were born; and into our labours other men will in their turn enter. It is therefore a serious error to suppose that independence of infallible human authority means the same thing, or anything like the same thing, as a repudiation of that law of spiritual succession which makes the present generation of mankind the rightful heir of all the experience of the past.

§ 6. The order of dependence in domestic life is a Divine institution, and as such we cannot abrogate it. But, like all God's gifts to us as moral beings, we can cultivate it and turn it to the purposes of our spiritual progress. It is, indeed, a great part of a parent's duty to prepare his child for freedom, and in doing so he will raise the child to his side in a common brotherhood. Whether he does so or not, the time of transition comes by a law as certain as that which causes the ripened seed to be shaken from the pod, and as that which thrusts forth the young bird from the nest to seek its own food. But it is only among the lower orders of creation that the parent has the very doubtful privilege of transmitting all its own in-

stinets and prejudices into its litter and its fry. without any possibility of improvement.* When parental influence is rightly employed, it will aim at giving the child such a start in life as that he shall only commence his course of improvement at the highest point to which the parent has himself reached. Under such conditions a true and even a dogmatic authority enters into Christian life. But then this authority is provisional and disciplinary, not perpetual and infallible; and its function is only fulfilled as it gradually prepares the mind for personal independence. It is the same with the Church. Those who are the children of the Church to-day, will to-morrow become the Church itself, having children of her own. And her highest duty is to train them for God, although she is thereby superseding her own authority, and teaching them to be wiser and holier than herself.

§ 7. When the time of emancipation arrives, men are very likely, if they have not been trained for liberty, to break away resentfully from their hereditary beliefs as from a condition of bondage. If they have not been taught that there are determinate principles of method in the conduct of inquiry, and that liberty of thought consists in passing from the lower law of authoritative inculcation to the higher law of personal verification, and even of original

* Cf. "The place of Ancient Greece in the Providential Order." By the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, p. 65. "Beginning anew each man for himself—a privilege which I had thought was restricted to the lower orders of creation, where the parent infuses no prejudices into its litter or its fry."

research, freedom will be to them but a doubtful benefit. The result, in such cases, often is, that they wander into the pathless wastes of a barren scepticism, or, in despair of finding truth at all, give themselves up to other pursuits.

§ 8. But as no right can exist without its corresponding duty, so the very best way of vindicating the claim to freedom of Christian inquiry is to practise it under its true conditions. And among these conditions is that of using all the helps we can obtain from the learning, the experience, and the example of all the best men who have ever lived. Let a man only feel his true relation to Christ, and then he can accept St. Paul's words as revealing to him a charter of inheritance. "Let no man glory in men. For all are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." *

§ 9. In endeavouring still further to determine our relations to our fellow-men in the prosecution of Christian inquiry, we ought not to overlook our obligations to the dead, and the immense stores of human thought about Christ which remain over from the past. Those doctrines, at least, which were generally accepted by the Church must at one time have been the expression of living human convictions, and must have been elaborated amidst a long and patient study of the Scriptures according to the best logical methods then recognised.

* 1 Cor. iii. 21-23.

If the inductive method of investigation was not formally employed by theologians, it was equally neglected by philosophers; and few men can live far in advance of their own age. But much was achieved by the methods then in use. The theology of the Church, as it is received in each successive age, adequately expresses the degree of insight which the wisest and best of its members may have as yet obtained into the teaching of the gospel; and it had for them the power of a living truth, regulating their prayers, influencing their conduct, and shaping the course of the Church's life and history. We may be sure that their interpretation of God's word was real, even though we may see (as they could not) that it was incomplete, tentative, and capable of modification; as indeed all human conceptions of Divine truth must be. There is always an infinite distance between God's truth and man's theology; so that scientific expositions are always asymptotic, and not final and exhaustive. But all human things have their human value. Old buildings, old books, old creeds, old sciences, even when superseded by more recent productions, have their historic use, and serve to reveal the several stages of human progress. To lose them altogether would be to lose the links of continuity which bind us to the past.

§ 10. And what is not less important, is the experience of our fellow-men in regard to the method of inquiry, as well as its results. We are deeply interested in the mental processes through which

men pass. This interest extends to their errors and mistakes ; to the successive steps by which they reached their theoretical conclusions ; to their guesses at truth ; to the manner in which the hints and anticipations of one mind came, with another mind, to ripen into a theory ; to what was felt as well as what was thought ; to the moral condition of the mind ; its hopes and fears ; its terrors at the first glimpse it obtained of new truths, and its joy at their full revelation ; in the history of doctrines as well as in their definition ; and to the influence of heresies regarded as the first essays of speculative minds to deal with certain of the Christian facts. All this is important, and may be turned to good account by later inquirers, as warning them of dangers to be avoided and as furnishing them with materials for the construction of a true method of search. The baffled enterprises of inquiry are almost as important to succeeding thinkers as those which have been successful.*

§ 11. And then we are sometimes obliged to depend upon others as the intellectual pioneers of progress and the forlorn hope of the world. We need men to accept, in the common interest, all the perils of the first venture into the unknown and the untried, men who will dare to incur the risk of having to fill up the trenches over which we are advancing to victory. Every mouthful of food we eat, without fear of disgust or of fatal

* Playfair has noted it as a service which Newton perhaps owes to Descartes, that " he had exhausted one of the most tempting forms of error."—Whewell's " History of Inductive Science," vol. ii. p. 139.

results, has had at one time and by some person to be tasted at the risk of life. Seas have been crossed, caverns have been entered, pits have been descended by men who, like those who feel forward on the ice, have taken upon themselves the perils of leadership. It may truly be said that almost all our daily blessings are ours at the risk of some one's life. In Christian inquiry, the peril men have had to incur is purely artificial inasmuch as it is the creation of our own timidity and unbelief. We have treated as criminals those who have undertaken the tentative processes of religious thought. Men who have been the first to push forward the limits of experience have been branded as innovators, and have been silenced by a policy of repression. In our classification of human character, our law of affinity has brought together, under one category, thieves, murderers, discoverers, heretics, and apostles. Even our Lord Himself "was numbered with the transgressors." This is essentially immoral; and the ethics of inquiry teach us that our treatment of our fellow-men has, in this respect, to undergo a great change.

§ 12. Besides all this, God's truth is the common property of mankind. If any man or body of men becomes possessor of any portion of that truth, our business is not to fight against them because they do not belong to our party; but, just the contrary, our business is to claim their truth as ours as well as theirs. It may be their truth in right of discovery or of persistent guardianship when others

would, by their neglect, have lost it out of the world; but they have no right to a monopoly, and are no poorer for our taking it from them. If we treat them as opponents, to be ignored and crushed, we may be guilty of a fierce and blind endeavour to deprive ourselves of our own inheritance of truth. They may be sectarians, but we are not called upon to commit ourselves to their sect. What we have to do, is simply to understand the truth they claim, and to understand the truth is to possess it. And I conceive that the want of such understanding of other people's truth, even more than the want of affection and respect, stands in the way of the union of the Church; and it is the principal reason why we are so incredulous of the possibility of a common basis of great fundamental principles, in which all believers shall agree. It is not proper to call that catholic which is anything less than all-inclusive of truth and goodness. A catholicism that arbitrarily shuts out any part of God's truth which has been acquired by any human mind, forfeits by that very act its right to the catholic name. It proclaims thereby its inability to find a place for all that belongs to Christ; and so confesses, as a matter of fact, that it is less catholic than Christ Himself.

§ 13. In refusing to accept man as an infallible teacher of Divine truth, we are not, therefore, as is often assumed, obliged also to reject his help as a brother and a teacher, wiser and better than ourselves. In saying to him, "I dare not take you as an infallible authority in the knowledge of

salvation," I am not obliged, by any logical or moral necessity, to say also, "I do not stand in need of your help." And if, in order to frighten us into submission to infallible authority, any one should magnify the difficulties attending upon an inquiry into the canon of Scripture, the history of the transmission of its books, the translation of the original documents, and the critical interpretation of their meaning; we may ask whether we may not avail ourselves of all the aid the Church has to offer in respect to these matters, without first accepting the dogma of infallibility? Are not the labours of learned men the common property of mankind, which no Church or sect can monopolise or withhold from our use? And we may even ask whether, besides the help of popes and the great doctors of the Church, God has not also raised up helpers quite outside the Church, to aid (unconsciously to themselves, perhaps) in carrying forward the knowledge of His salvation?

§ 14. To sum up these remarks, it may be observed that it is only when we "cease from man" as an infallible authority, that we can for the first time fully discover the great value of his help. If, on the one hand, submission to God is the warrant for our independence of man; so, on the other, that submission is our security that man shall be able to help us without enslaving and debasing us.* It is the usurpation of undue authority that has

* Madame de Staël has somewhere said—"Dieu et la loi peuvent seuls commander en maître à l'homme sans l'avilir."

deprived the world of a large portion of the fruit of honest human toil. All man's work once done, whether good or bad, becomes our property, and may be used for our improvement or our warning. And yet how large a part of this great store of human experience has been utterly lost to the world, because authority has interposed to suppress it. In "the georgics of the soul," no less than in the processes of vegetable growth, even the fallen leaves and the refuse, and the rottenness of all the past life of the world, which cannot itself live on in vital germs, may be made to contribute to the bloom and beauty and fruitfulness of a new spring ; and if not so used, will very likely breed pestilence and death to the living. No waste is more sinful than the waste of that sweat of the human brain and the human heart which has been expended in the quest of truth. It is simple justice due to our fellow-men, to use and to acknowledge, as far as we can, the service which they have rendered by their mental labours to the cause of humanity.*

§ 15. In concluding the Third Book of this Essay, I have accomplished what is by far the most important part of the work I have undertaken. If the end I had in view has been even but imperfectly attained, the reader can hardly help feeling that the success of Christian inquiry depends much more upon ethical than upon merely intellectual conditions ; and that, as the fluids of the eye must be transparent and unstained, in order to clearness

* See Appendix.

of bodily vision, so purity of heart is essential to the perception of spiritual truth as presented in the Christian facts. It will also be apparent that whilst Christ is the object of vision, He is, at the same time, the healer of our spiritual blindness. We can only see Him truly in the light which comes from Himself. His cross, especially, is needful to dispel the false conceptions and unfounded hopes of the human mind. It is a light for all ages of the world, and in that light all falsehood perishes and gives way to the reign of truth. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." *

* 2 Cor. v. 6.

BOOK IV.

OF EXPERIMENTAL CHRISTIANITY.

"If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."—1 COR. v. 17.

"What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of t'ie knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.—PHIL. iii. 7-11.

"And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."—MARK iv. 26-29.

CHAPTER I.

OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE IN GENERAL.

§ 1. It has been my object in the former part of this Essay to exhibit the process of Induction as a method of investigation which, under proper ethical regulation, is well adapted to aid us in the interpretation of those historical phenomena which make up the Life of Christ, as recorded in the writings of the Evangelists.

§ 2. I have now to observe that the gospel of Christ can never be fully understood whilst it is studied as an isolated factor, separated from the practical life and experience of mankind. Its saving truth must pass into a subjective reality, and appear in the renewed character of its disciples, before we can see its full significance. No reasoning expended upon abstract principles, apart from their efficacy in the moral world, will enable us to obtain any real insight into the way of salvation. The life which Christ sowed in the world was destined to reach its full development, not in a theoretic creed, but in "the fruit of the Spirit, which is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." *

* Eph. v. 9.

§ 3. How little, for instance, should we know of the meaning of the proposition that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, if we were without the experience of St. Paul—taking him as exhibiting the typical example of Christian experience.* There are, in fact, two principal figures in the New Testament—Christ and St. Paul. The Gospels furnish the record of the one, and the Epistles of St. Paul (besides their doctrinal and prophetic elements, which lie beyond the scope of the present essay) give the delineation of the other. To say, “Not Paul, but Jesus,” with a view to the disparagement of the former, is to mistake the distinctive and complementary relations between the two, and is to suppose an alternative where no alternative exists. It is as if we were to say, “Not the fruit, but the tree;” or, “Not the light, but the sun.” If it were not for the fruit we should know very little of the nature of the tree; and without the atmosphere or some other object to reflect it, the light of the sun would be invisible. We do not think of Christ as a “Christian,” as we do of St. Paul; and for the reason, that He is so much more.

§ 4. Moreover, whatever prominence is given to the figure of St. Paul in the New Testament, he is but one among many typical forms in which Christian experience is there presented to our view. It would be easy to dwell upon the character of Peter,

* “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should believe on him to life everlasting.”—1 Tim. i. 16.

and John, and James, and Thomas, in order to show that Christ's saving grace was not exhausted in the salvation of St. Paul, nor limited to the special form of manifestation which is exemplified in him.

§ 5. I have already (p. 33) pointed out the fact that what is called experimental Christianity consists in a subjective consciousness of Christ's saving power, and not in the subjecting of Christ to new forms of objective personal revelation, nor in the repetition of the facts of His earthly life. There can now, in the latter sense of the word, be no experiment. We cannot now question Him, as the Jews did when He was among them. There can be no new situation of trial tending to reveal, by His behaviour under it, some fresh aspect of His character and designs. But then it must be strictly observed that it is only because no such additional facts are needed, that the possibility of obtaining them has ceased to exist.

§ 6. It is on this account that Christ's salvation, objectively considered, is to be regarded as a finished work, to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken away. It is with the gospel as with the creation; both were perfect from the beginning, and contained, by a Divine anticipation, the germs of all future developments. Such as it is, it is God's highest revelation to the world, the unspeakable gift of infinite wisdom and love; and it needs no contribution from us to make it more perfect than it is. All that we have

to do in the way of experiment, is to take the facts as we find them, and try by true processes of thought to understand their meaning, and to use the principles collected from them as spiritual food given by God for the hunger of the soul. This is the teaching of our Lord's parable which relates how the king "sent forth his servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage."*

§ 7. Obedience to the gospel is the only active form of Christian experiment which lies in our power. In calling us to undertake this experiment, God is laying upon us the highest demand which He has ever yet made upon human nature. It will, perhaps, be long before the world at large will be brought to yield to the Divine call as leading to the only solution of the mystery of human life. But in the mean time every one of us may, in his measure, try the experiment for himself, and see what comes of it. Many persons besides St. Paul have found in yielding to the influence of the Holy Ghost that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." †

§ 8. It will be evident that the field of inquiry which is thus opened to us covers large spaces

* Matt. xxii. 4.

† Gal. v. 22-24.

of human history and experience, both personal and social, quite distinct from the life of Christ; and it may be questioned whether the method of induction can be made available for the interpretation of so vast and complex a collection of human facts. The utmost that I can now attempt in dealing with so large a subject, is to trace some of the leading characteristics of Experimental Christianity, as revealed in the life of individual believers and in the history of the Church.

CHAPTER II.

OF UNION WITH CHRIST BY FAITH.

§ 1. CHRISTIAN experience, to use a common figure, may be regarded as the product of two factors—the product of faith into Christ; and as Christ is unchangeable, the resulting experience will be proportioned to the strength and activity of the other factor, our faith. This is the ideal form of conceiving the process, and this seems to correspond with the figurative expressions of our Lord: “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you;” and “He that eateth me shall live by me.”* And St. Paul seems to set forth the process of Christian experience in the same manner, but by different imagery, when he says: “All we beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”† This is the process of Christian salvation. It is a change taking place in us, as the result of faith in Christ. The whole soul—the reason, the affections, the conscience—is by faith raised into its most receptive and healthy state through the influence

* John vi. 53, 57.

† 2 Cor. iii. 18.

of the Spirit of God ; and this Divine awakening of the Christian consciousness fits the believer for the apprehension of Christ's grace and truth.

§ 2. Taking our departure from this ideal conception of the nature of Christian experience, we may, by deductive inference, safely draw the three following conclusions.

§ 3. First, we may conclude that the ends of Christianity cannot be wrought out in experience without our own active co-operation. To refuse to yield the mind to the gospel of Christ, when it is offered to our acceptance, is to refuse the Christian salvation. Christ may be near to us in all the fulness of His saving power, and yet not profit us, simply because our faith is too languid to command the spiritual processes which are needful, on our part, to the inward assimilation of the facts of His gospel. It is just as the untasted bread might say to the starving man who refuses to take it, " If I cannot nourish you, it is only because you will not eat me." However rich a soil may be, and however well it is adapted to develop the plant, we have no right to expect its luxuriance to supersede the functions of vegetation in the plant itself. If we will not take the trouble to think ourselves into Christ (if I may use the words), how is it possible for us, in any spiritual sense, to live upon His flesh and blood ? This work of faith is the very condition upon which the experimental proof of salvation depends. Without faith in Christ we do not give ourselves even a chance of being saved by Christ.

There is no law of the Christian life more certain than this, that without faith in Christ, where the conditions for its exercise exist, there is no salvation. It has always been so. We read of the Jews, that they could not enter into God's rest because of their unbelief; and we are warned lest we also should "fall after the same example of unbelief." We read, "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." And this is put still more strongly by St. Mark. "He could do no mighty work. . . . And he marvelled at their unbelief." And, as a prelude to His works of mercy, He habitually demanded of those who asked His help, "Believest thou that I am able to do this?"

§ 4. Faith awakens the whole mind to its utmost capacity of reception of the Divine grace: it is, therefore, the very opposite of that deadening credulity which drugs the reason, and blinds the conscience, and in all respects lowers the spiritual susceptibility. We may call such credulity by the name of faith, but it is only in the same way as we may call the devil an angel. An angel he is, but a depraved angel; and credulity is a depraved faith which has lost its virtue, and only deadens the soul, and stands between us and God.

§ 5. The Second Inference to be drawn from the ideal conception of the process of salvation is this, namely, that our mere mental activity, however devout and active it may be, cannot, if exercised by itself, apart from Christ as the objective factor,

result in a true Christian experience. In all experimental knowledge there must be facts as well as ideas. Salvation is not a merely subjective process; it is a subjective process carried on in the soul by the assimilation of material brought in from without. The Holy Spirit, in performing His work, ever takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us. Cut off from such supplies, the mind is left to its own resources; and sooner or later it is sure to feel the hunger of the prodigal, who, when he had spent all that he brought with him from his father's house, found a mighty famine in the land, and began to be in want, and "would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat." There are certain seed-roots which, without being planted in any soil, will, at the approach of spring, in the exuberant activity of their inner life, try, and not unsuccessfully, to put forth shoots and perform all the functions of the planted root, depending only on the slender supplies contained in the seed itself. But there is scarcely any sight in nature more sad to witness than such an effort, because we know that it must end in exhaustion and failure; for however truly the functions of the plant may be performed, it cannot perfect its fruit for want of nourishment from without.*

* The Subjective Method is described by Bacon in the following lively manner. He is speaking of men who, "knowing little history, either of nature or of man, did, out of no great quantity of matter and infinite agitation of wit, spin out unto us those laborious webs of learning which are extant in their books." And then he adds: "For the wit and mind of man, if it work upon matter which is the contemplation of the creatures of God, worketh according to the stuff,

§ 6. It has indeed been said (by Cardinal Manning) that in certain cases "the conscience, subdued and held in subjection, exercises true virtues upon a false object, and renders to a human authority the submissive trust which is due only to the Divine voice."* It has also been said (this time by Miss Martineau) that, so long as there is faith, it does not so much matter what is believed, and that "all genuine faith is—other circumstances being the same—of about equal value. The value is in the act of faith more than in the object."†

§ 7. This seems very much like saying that poison will serve very well as a substitute for wholesome food, if only the processes of mastication and of assimilation are rightly performed; or that there may be a true worship of a false God, or that a true science may be constructed out of false facts.

and is limited thereby; but if it work upon itself, as the spider worketh his web, then it is endless, and brings forth indeed cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit.

"Upon these intellectualists, which are, notwithstanding, taken for the most sublime and divine philosophers, Heraclitus gave a just censure, saying, 'Men sought truth in their own little worlds, and not in the great and common world;' for they disdain to spell, and so by degrees to read, in the volume of God's works; and, contrariwise, by continual meditation and agitation of wit, do urge, and, as it were, invoke their own spirits to divine, and give oracles unto them, whereby they are dererredly deluded."—"Advancement of Learning," book i. p. 50.

* "England and Christendom," p. 98.

† "Eastern Life," vol. iii. p. 289 Mr. Lecky says: "We look in vain for that beautiful character of the past, so distrustful of self, so trustful of others, so rich in self-denial and modesty, so simple, so earnest, so devout, which even when, Ixion like, it bestowed its affections on a cloud, made its very illusions the source of some of the purest virtues of our nature."—Lecky's "Morals," vol. i. p. 149.

§ 8. In real life, however, there can be no doubt that men of honest hearts do actually find some spiritual nourishment in the most unpromising systems of belief. We have already seen (pp. 302 and 357) that even illusion, if rightly used, has its disciplinary use in our mental growth. And then, it must be granted, that sincerity is a real virtue of the highest kind, even though, whilst giving consistency to character, it may fail to bring character into conformity with the objective truth of the Divine order. Integrity of motive has very much to do with the worth of the agent, although it does not guarantee the rightness of the action. And, finally, we may safely conclude that men who have exhibited great virtues under unfavourable external conditions, would be best prepared to profit by a more perfect system of Divine revelation. This agrees with the saying of our Lord, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." If a man acts according to the light he has, he will not be condemned for errors which he had no means of correcting. Pious heathen and the Old Testament saints are not to be judged by a Christian standard.

§ 9. But we are here dealing with a very definite class of persons and conditions. It is not a question of personal worth, but of Christian experience. We are Christian men, living under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, and what is insisted on is this—that we cannot, even by the most energetic activity of our own minds, get a true Christian

experience without having before us the real Christian facts ; any more than we can get a true knowledge of the material world out of false facts or no facts at all. Sir Isaac Newton's first elaborate calculations upon the theory of the world took as much mental labour as those which afterwards turned out successful ; but having been unknowingly founded upon a false measurement of the degree of longitude, they did not agree with the facts of nature, and so he laid them aside as untrue. The first were as great a proof of genius as the other ; but in the view of an experimental knowledge of physical reality, the difference was nothing less than the difference between truth and falsehood.

§ 10. The fact is, the process of Christian experience (like that of a Christian science) is not less subject to fixed laws than are the processes of digestion and growth ; and the fundamental principle, as it has been laid down, leads to the conclusion that faith cannot perform its function alone, in the absence of Christ as the true bread which came down from heaven. No amount of mental agitation, no logical process of thought, no passionate endeavour to get saved by the naked power of willing to be saved, no attempt to take ourselves up in our own arms and lift ourselves over the line of our separation from God, no inward confidence of being right, no passionate abandonment of self-sacrifice, no determinate shutting of the eyes and calmly waiting the issue—in a word,

no merely subjective process of any kind whatever is sufficient to make us Christians. It is Christ alone that is the proper object of our faith ; and it is by looking off from self and all besides, and looking unto Jesus, that the experience of salvation is to be carried forward in our lives. No substitute can supply His place. Any attempt to grow up into Christian manhood without Him must result in a sterility and disappointment as lamentable as that which the prophet Isaiah attributes to the earnest endeavours of the Jews to find in idols a substitute for the true God. "He feedeth on ashes : a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand ?"*

§ 11. The Third Inference to be drawn from the ideal conception of the process of salvation, is the critical nature of the epoch at which our union with Christ begins. However obscure this beginning may be in actual experience, baffling all our endeavours to give it a fixed date, or to assign its immediate cause ; yet, in a logical point of view, we are obliged to conceive of a period of time at which the two factors are brought together—that is to say, a period at which our faith first embraces the Saviour, and begins to appropriate His saving grace. It is the birthday of the soul into eternal life, and the beginning of a new destiny ; and, from the very nature of the case, the inception of so great a future must be regarded with special

* Isa. xliv. 20.

interest. This is implied in our Lord's words: "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance." The conscious acceptance by faith of the principle that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, involves in it the initial adjustment of our entire spiritual relationship—intellectual as well as experimental—to the covenant of grace. And if we look at the meaning of things, rather than at the meaning of words, we shall find in Scripture a constant reference to the period of our conversion to Christ as, in the literal sense of the word, the very crisis (*κρίσις*) of our spiritual condition in the sight of God. The Divine forgiveness not only covers the sinful past, but it sets us right with the whole universe of things. This is God's doing, and it is described in the writings of St. Paul by the celebrated phrase, Justification by Faith.*

§ 12. For by justification, St. Paul evidently

* "The doctrine of justification by faith," says Mr. Wilson ("Essays and Reviews," p. 160), "is not met with in the apostolic writings, except those of St. Paul." But it should be remembered that the thing itself is met with everywhere in the Scripture, even though the phrase is not. The initiation of the state of grace is a fact of human experience, by whatever name it is called. In the Bible it is exhibited under various figures, such as the adoption of a child, the reception of the prodigal son, the sowing of seed, the grafting of a branch, the planting of a root, the bestowment of citizenship; and notably it is held forth in the sacrament of baptism. These are, all, so many partial representations and different aspects of that adjustment of the conditions of spiritual life which takes place when we are brought by faith into union with Christ. If St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith has a special significance, it is not because it applies to a different process, but because he views the matter in its relation to the Divine law of human nature, the penalties of which we have incurred by sin.

does not mean the vindication of our past life, as if we were falsely accused by our own conscience or by the Divine law, when we are charged with having "all sinned and come short of the glory of God." At first sight the word justification may seem to bear this meaning. But it is not (I would repeat) the meaning of the word, but the meaning of the thing, that concerns us; and St. Paul's doctrine of justification proceeds upon the very opposite view of the case. It regards our past life as altogether false and sinful; and so far from putting forward even the shadow of a plea of justification *in this sense*, he insists upon the universality of human sin, so "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."* Moreover, it is impossible to conceive that when God justifies the ungodly, He confounds moral distinctions, and calls evil good and darkness light. The past is past, and can never be undone. What we really gain in justification is a total readjustment of our spiritual condition, by being broken off from that unchanging past, and treated as forgiven children by our heavenly Father. The penalties of sin are arrested. We are admitted into a new state—a state of grace and acceptance; and then, as soon as we have passed in, the gate is shut behind us, and the retributive consequences of past transgressions are barred out. This is the blessedness of those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered—the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.†

* Rom. iii. 19.

† Ibid. iv. 7, 8.

§ 13. Nor by justification does St. Paul mean the final adjudication of character amidst the eternal light of the Day of Judgment. So far is this from his meaning, that he commonly speaks of it as an event which, *in principle*, takes effect at the beginning and not at the end—or, perhaps, as really at the beginning as at the end—of the Christian course, and as the fundamental condition of all true Christian life. The working out of our salvation cannot, in his view, *even begin*, till we are forgiven and released from the sins that are past. It is by faith in Christ we obtain this freedom; and it then becomes possible for us, as it was with the pardoned prodigal, to begin life over again under new conditions of spiritual experience. From the moment we enter into this state of grace, our condition is one of perfect moral adjustment to the universe; and although we may have made no single step in the actual attainment of goodness beyond the throwing of ourselves upon the Saviour, we are accounted righteous by Him “who justifieth the ungodly.” Having obtained a standing-place on the eternal foundation, henceforth the great care of our life is to be directed to the work we build upon it. And therefore justification is to be regarded as not so much an end, but a means to an end, an investiture of filial privilege for higher service.

§ 14. In our Lord’s parable, for example, the Publican is represented as going down to his house “justified” rather than the Pharisee. But (1) this certainly does not mean that the Publican was not

the sinner he called himself, or that his confession was the result of a morbid state of conscience. (2) Nor that this justification was the final judgment pronounced by God upon his character, as a completed thing. (3) But it means that his prayer for mercy was answered, that he was pardoned and accepted by God, and that henceforth he might be looked upon as a man who, notwithstanding all his past sinfulness and his present imperfection, was in a truer sense a righteous man, fundamentally, in the sight of God, and more capable, under the treatment of Divine mercy, of growing into mature goodness, than was the Pharisee, with all his religious zeal and self-complacency.

§ 15. And in His treatment of the woman taken in adultery, as contrasted with that which He showed towards the Pharisees who accused her, we find Him saying, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more;" not as implying that she had not been guilty of the crime, but as detecting in her a style of character which had in it an element of latent goodness, such as was altogether wanting in those who, in their affected virtue, had dragged her into His presence.

§ 16. In our intellectual relations to Divine truth, the thinker may come to a pause, arrested by perplexity and doubt, and may set himself to find out, once for all, where he is and what are his true bearings; so that, freeing himself from all past mistakes, he may afterwards work onwards, as from a certain fixed point, without fear of losing his way.

This seems to have been the design of Kant, in one of the earliest of his Essays, bearing the title of "Was heisst: sich im Denken orientiren?" * And Coleridge speaks of the need we have of self-correction: "Because if we wander but in a single instance from our path, we cannot reach our goal, except by retracing our steps to the point of divergence, and thence beginning our progress anew; just as a ship beating off and on an unknown coast often takes, in nautical phrase, 'a new departure.'" †

§ 17. These illustrations, taken from our intellectual life, may serve to convey some idea of justification as a rectification of our spiritual condition. When God calls us by His grace into the fellowship of Christ, He pardons all our past iniquities and seems to say to us: "Now begin all over again, and let bygones be bygones. Trust yourself wholly to my grace given you in Christ. Take up your cross and follow Him. Follow Him wisely, guided by the Spirit which I have given you, and you shall find yourselves gradually coming into a fuller, holier, and more blessed life than you have ever known before." ‡

* Kant's Werke, Erster Band, s. 119.

† "Ency. Metrop. Prelimin. Treat." vol. i. p. 2.

‡ "Men have wearied themselves in the dark, having been amused with false fires; and instead of going home have wandered all night in untrodden ways, but have not found out their soul's desire. But, therefore, since we are so miserable, and are in error, and have wandered very far, we must do as wandering travellers used to do, go back just to that place from whence we wandered, and begin upon a new account. Let us go to the truth itself, to Christ; and He will tell us an easy way of ending all our quarrels, for we shall find Christianity to be the easiest

§ 18. Union with Christ by faith, makes so great a difference in our character and condition, that St. Paul says: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." * The element of faith, even in its most incipient and undeveloped form, and when found in company with the most serious defects of character, constitutes a spiritual receptivity by which it is possible (so to speak) to assimilate that perfect righteousness which once for all has been wrought out for us in Christ's human life. When, by faith, we are rooted into Christ, therefore, the fundamental conditions of this process are adjusted; and that righteousness, to which it is predestined that we should be conformed, may in principle be reckoned as if it were already ours. If we do not feel equally confident in the application of the principle to individual persons, it is not because the principle itself is uncertain, but for two other reasons. First, because in this world of trial we have the mysterious power of sinning against the very gospel of the grace of God; and, Secondly, because we are not able to decide for certain upon the integrity of the experimental evidence in any particular case, as to whether the faith is a genuine faith or a counterfeit, and whether the Christ believed in is the very Christ of God, or an idol of our own minds. But justification and the hardest thing in the world: it is like a secret in arithmetic, infinitely hard till it be found out by a right operation, and then so plain, we wonder we did not understand it earlier."—Bp. Jer. Taylor's "Via Intelligentiæ."

* 2 Cor. v. 17.

tion is God's work, not ours : and so we read of Abraham, that " he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." *

§ 19. In now looking at the relation which faith in Christ bears to the whole process of salvation, it is easy to see that, over and above the readjustment of our condition, there is also the presence of an element which forms the germ of a new spiritual life. The great end of salvation is the attainment of perfect conformity to the image of Christ. When faith truly embraces Jesus Christ, all the conditions needful for this purpose are present. In the person of Christ there is the realised idea of a true humanity, or what in Scripture is called a perfect righteousness. Faith, in embracing Christ, becomes possessed entirely of this ideal, not bit by bit, but as a whole, just as the whole mother enters into a child's love. So that the act of faith, by which we receive Christ, not only marks the crisis of justification, but is also the actual beginning of our sanctification. And then all true faith in Christ is ultimately to be converted into reality, and cease to be mere faith, by becoming conscious experience. The ideal of humanity, or " the righteousness of the law," is to be " fulfilled in us." " When he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is." *

* Gen. xv. 6. If the true historical perspective is observed, this event will be seen to stand in the foreground of the life of Abraham, as recorded in the book of Genesis. Abraham was in this case justified when he believed in the Lord. It was at a much later period that another event took place, and to this St. James appeals when he asks, " Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered up Isaac his son upon the altar ? " † 1 John iii. 2.

§ 20. These remarks will perhaps enable us to understand in what sense faith is said to be imputed to us for righteousness. There is no fiction in the case. Imputation does not mean that faith is regarded by God as a substitute for righteousness, in the case of Christian holiness; as if where there is faith, righteousness might be dispensed with.* Its meaning is altogether different. The very end of faith is the actual attainment of righteousness; and the gospel has for its special glory that it is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."† And so absolutely certain is this principle, that where faith in Christ comes into practical and persistent operation, the whole future of the process of salvation may be anticipated and predicted; and, in this way, the righteousness of Christ, to which we are to be entirely conformed, may be attributed to the initial act of faith in Him. The sapling, on being planted in its proper soil, is really an oak, though it is only just beginning to be an oak; an oak, though the next winter's frost may kill it; an oak in a sense in which a staff of dead wood, stuck in the ground beside it as a support, is not an oak. And the toothless, beardless infant, though only just beginning to be a man, has in it, undeveloped, all the innate tendencies and capacities of perfect human nature. "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them."‡

* See Appendix.

† Rom. i. 16.

‡ Psa. cxxxix. 16.

§ 21. In the First Epistle of St. John, this ideal and perfect conception of the Christian state is presented under quite a different set of expressions. The apostle speaks of believers as being in such a state of purity as that which, in the long run, the principles they hold tend infallibly to make them; although in actual experience and attainment they fall far short of the description.* Processes are already commenced which are to issue in a perfect conformity to Christ; and that issue seems actually present to his mind. He has this ideal before him when he says: "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." And again, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." But then in view of the actual imperfection of believers, he says, in the same epistle, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

* It will be remembered that we are looking at the process in its ideal or logical, and not in its historical aspect. It is therefore needful to distinguish between the certainty of tendency and the certainty of eventuation. This distinction is thus clearly stated by Mr. Mill:—"The science of Ethology may be called the exact science of human nature; for its truths are not, like the empirical laws which depend upon them, approximate generalisations, but real laws. It is, however (as in all cases of complex phenomena), necessary to the exactness of the propositions that they should be hypothetical only, and affirm tendencies, not facts. They must not assert that something will always or certainly happen, but only that such and such will be the effect of a given cause, so far as it operates uncounteracted. It is a scientific proposition that cowardice tends to make men cruel, not that it always makes them so; that interest on one side of a question tends to bias

CHAPTER III.

OF THE OBSCURE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

§ 1. In the preceding chapter I have attempted to unfold the ideal conception of the necessary conditions of the constitution and growth of the Christian Life. The method I have adopted in doing so has been the method of deductive reasoning and appeal to Scripture statements. If the Method of Induction is available for the further elucidation of the subject, it would be necessary for us to begin at the other end, and look at the facts of Christian experience as they reveal themselves in the lives of individual believers, and especially as they have taken place in our own consciousness. This does not form the principal

the judgment, not that it invariably does so. These propositions being assertive only of tendencies, are not the less universally true, because the tendencies may be interrupted."—Mill's "Logic," vol. ii. p. 528.

So it is a law in the kingdom of God that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin," even though, in point of fact, men trample it under their feet, and never feel its cleansing power. And, again, it is an eternal changeless truth, that "the goodness of God leads men to repentance," even though, in fact, men may despise that goodness, and refuse to repent. And it is an immutable truth, that he that believeth shall be saved, although, in fact, men may make shipwreck of faith, and so fail of the grace of God. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself."

design of the present Essay, nor have I space for its full discussion; yet I will now devote a few paragraphs to its consideration.

§ 2. The Christian life actually begins when (to use St. Paul's expression) Christ is formed within us. Now the problem is to account for this fact as a matter of actual experience, not by an appeal to Scripture (as in the foregoing chapter), but by an investigation of the facts themselves, with a view to collect from them the principles or laws which determine their peculiar character.

§ 3. It appears a self-evident proposition, that all true Christian experience can only take place where there is faith in Christ. But faith in Christ does not grow up of itself. It must be generated by an efficient cause. But inductive science declines to deal with efficient causes of any kind, as lying beyond the range of mere intellectual research.* We are taught by faith that all beginnings must ultimately be traced back to God. It is only after the Divine has entered into time, and taken historical form in *particulars* (to use the technical

* "I envy the man who has ever been able to form the faintest notion how a cause gives rise to an effect. Take the simplest case imaginable: suppose a ball in motion to impinge upon a ball at rest. I know very well, as a matter of fact, that the ball in motion will communicate some of its motion to the ball at rest, and that the motion of the two balls after collision is precisely correlated with the masses of both balls and the amount of motion of the first: but how does this come about? In what manner can we conceive that the *vis viva* of the first ball passes into the second? . . . In ultimate analysis everything is incomprehensible, and the whole object of science is simply to reduce the fundamental incomprehensibilities to the smallest possible number."—Professor Huxley, *Continental Review*, Nov. 1871, p. 466.

expression), that it becomes subject to inductive investigation. The agency of God is not arrested at the frontier of history. He is not only the First Cause, He is also the All-pervading Cause. God enters into all the events of time. He is ever working in us. This view of causation brings God very near to us, instead of putting Him back (as science is supposed to do) to a vast prehistoric distance, as the mere beginning or first link in the ever-lengthening chain of physical and spiritual sequences. We are met at every point, in both orders, by the ever present help of God; by His infallible help, I would say. But in saying so, it is with the single qualification that the effectual help of God can be found available only in accordance with a definite system of administration, or fixed covenant, into which we are invited to enter as conscious and willing parties. Within the limits of His own unchangeable ordinances, both of nature and of grace, He never fails to keep faith with those who have learnt to know and trust Him.* The principle of physical causation, which is everywhere at work in the material world, is the symbol of His mysterious presence.†

§ 4. When we touch this mystery, intellectual research terminates. "I beheld," says the wise

* Jer. xxi. 35; xxxiii. 25.

† "So far is it from being true," says Bacon, "that the explanation of phenomena by natural causes leads us away from God and His Providence, that those philosophers who have passed their lives in discovering such causes, can find nothing that affords a final explanation without having recourse to God and His Providence."—"De Aug. Sci." iii. 4.

man, "all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea farther; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it." And, again, "As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all." It is just the same in the process of salvation. Our Lord has expressly said, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." If the question is again asked, How does the history of Christian experience really begin? the answer is: It begins by a Divine act, at a point which lies beyond mere intellectual research. No man becomes a willing, conscious disciple of Jesus Christ, apart from a mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit, which no scientific observation or analysis can account for.

§ 5. But it requires to be stated with equal firmness, that personal discipleship to Christ has a temporal history, and that this temporal history is open to scientific inquiry. There is reason to believe that latent tendencies are at work towards our salvation, long before our consciousness awakes to the fact, and before we are capable of co-ope-

rating in the movement by direct and conscious endeavour. We seem to come into possession of much of our experience by a law of inheritance, as if it had already been prepared for our use out of elements of a more rudimentary nature. This does not supersede the necessity of personal regeneration—the necessity of obtaining for ourselves, independently of ancestral advantages, a personal and individual union with Christ. In regeneration we are in immediate contact with the Holy Ghost, and are receiving life from God Himself. But this Divine operation does not preclude those foregoing processes, which have been taking place by secondary agencies, upon the lower plane of temporal history. There is, *on that lower plane*, a law of inherited tendencies and of transmitted cumulative experiences, which comes into play, and prepares the individual man for the special experiences of his individual life. The slow awakening of personal consciousness finds us already in possession of a vast fund of experience, which may be to us of great or of small value, as we are skilful enough to turn it to account. Consciousness is not the measure and limit of the reality of our spiritual, any more than of our physical life. We *are* more than we know that we are. All our science is imperfect. We need to be interpreted to ourselves. The facts of our own experience are but ill understood by us at the time of their occurrence, and we know but little of the extent to which the spiritual past is living on and reproducing itself in us.

§ 6. This is no abstruse statement, but is a simple matter of historical fact, often verified in the life of Christian families. In our childhood, before we were capable of conscious reflection, the gospel story, as told by a mother's love, was already beginning to take effect upon us. The facts of our Lord's life and death had awakened some kind of feeling and thought in our minds. We did not try to open our hearts to any special style of emotion, dictated to us by others; but we felt, notwithstanding. The story of the Cross was doing some part of its saving work, even though we never thought of giving it a theological interpretation. Besides this, we were baptized into Christ; we were called by His name; and were grafted into His body. We were taught to use His words in prayer to our Father in heaven. We professed our faith in the Articles of the Creed long before we attached any definite meaning to the words we employed; and yet those words had in them a strange power to affect our minds, and to produce pious emotions. We were also placed under the influence of domestic religious uses, of the ordinances of the Church, and of the literature of Christian biography, devotion, and poetry. Perhaps we may either have thought it sinful to ask the meaning of the services in which we were taught to join, as if they were too sacred for inquiry; or we may have regarded them as so natural, and in the settled order of things, that we did not think of them as matters that needed to be inquired into, any more

than we did of sleep, or sunshine, or vision, or the outbreking of spring, when it came. It is amidst such experiences that the beginnings of salvation have commonly been concealed; and under the cover of such early recollections, the Divine Author of the new life has begun to "create us anew in Christ Jesus."

§ 7. We here seem to have gone back to the furthest point in our past consciousness, only to find ourselves in the dim twilight of early morning; and behind that, there is nothing but the dark night. During the time in which we were passing through this first experience, we could feel, but we could not analyse our feelings. The unconscious experience was there, but we never thought of detaining it for interpretation. Now, at this distance of time, we can but partially recall the facts as they took place. We remember how we felt the influence of what we then thought to be the unseen world, but of what we now begin to suspect to have been the influence of the strange forms and supernatural creations of our own minds; taking them for realities, and trembling in their presence. Similar creations of other minds had a like effect upon us. The stories of the Arabian Nights appeared to us more interesting than the realities of life. We can also remember, perhaps, how easy we found it to be passionately devout, or ascetic, or conscientious, quite apart from any peculiarly Christian motives. The prayers of a child may be the real outcry of a human soul; the wish to go to heaven may be vivid and influential;

the thought of death may be cherished with a strange fascination, though nothing is known of the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ. And, at that period of life, everything may have for us a touch of poetry — flowers, leaves, sprouting seeds, birds, thunder, the moon, dark nights, even words, seem like living things : our own first attempts in writing, drawing, painting, may have a strange interest, of which we can give no scientific account. And all this reveals the existence of innate susceptibilities, upon which the process of salvation was to take effect. This is not peculiar to Christian childhood ; it belongs to human childhood all the world over, and under every form of religious training. When these feelings are brought under Christian treatment, they are not destroyed, but are transfigured and glorified.

§ 8. Another fact in the historical progress of personal salvation is the relation in which we found ourselves to that living Christianity which is embodied in persons and in the Church. The means of grace are of Divine appointment, and are fitted for the practical use of believers, and for the advancement of the salvation of the world. The word preached may, indeed, not profit us, not being mixed with faith. “ For what if some did not believe ? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect ? ” God’s ordinances, objectively considered, remain the same, amidst all our varying apprehensions of their value. It is God’s design, not our perception of His design, that measures

their true use; and no experience of ours can exhaust the Divine fulness which is treasured up in His word and sacraments. It is on this account that we shrink from pronouncing upon final causes in relation to the institutions of God. The Divine purposes may not be fully exhausted even when we have been most benefited by the ordinances of the Church. If we only knew how to use the means of grace more truly in conformity with God's design, and less subject to human precedent and ecclesiastical interpretation, we should ever find them to be to us a tree of life, bringing forth twelve manner of fruits, and yielding its fruit every month.

§ 9. But, distinct from all other experiences, and the only satisfactory issue of them all, is that birthday of the soul when the obscure beginnings of salvation emerge in clear, conscious, personal conversion of the soul to Christ. It is then that we begin to feel, for the first time, a true sense of our individuality, and of our relationship to God, and then all the outward forms of truth become transformed into living realities. The conscience then feels what sin really is as a spiritual evil. We then stand appalled amidst a new solitude. We are speechless and self-condemned before God. With the sense of sin, there strangely comes a deep and awful consciousness of spiritual personality. "We become as gods, knowing good and evil." The acceptance of personal blame puts an end, in us, to a mere instinctive and corporate life. We

find a new standing before God, and, with it, a new moral consciousness. It is at this point that faith in Christ, as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, consciously becomes to us the very crisis of our destiny. It may or may not be a sudden discovery, but it is the commencement of a new life and new hope. Christ becomes our prophet, priest, and king. Our painful solitude ends the moment we feel the attraction of His words, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." We feel willing, at that moment, to give up all that was true and good to us before—all our self-wisdom and self-righteousness—and to begin all over again from the bare resources which we find in Him. Such was the experience of St. Paul. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." *

§ 10. It is at this point that the order of experi-

* Phil. iii. 7-11.

ence is found to correspond with the doctrinal or ideal order of the process of salvation ; and that the adjustment of relationship between the two factors takes effect, which has already been spoken of as the crisis of justification. In actual experience, this is the time of the soul's joyful espousals to Him, who is now seen to be "the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." It is the bringing back of the lost sheep upon the Shepherd's shoulder. It is the ecstatic discovery of the Pearl of Great Price, for the possession of which the merchantman goes and sells all that he has. It is the entrance into that rest which remaineth for the people of God. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ : by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." *

§ 11. The experience which thus so blessedly issues in a state of grace and conscious acceptance with God, is evidently the result of a double process, the lines of which are parallel to each other. The one is internal and Divine, moving along a path wholly hidden from our intellectual view ; whilst the other is external, taking effect through an agency of secondary causes divinely appointed, but obviously destitute, in themselves, of any efficient power. This is very much like the theory of causation in physical inquiry, which, since the time of Hume, has been growing in acceptance. The

* Rom. v. 1, 2.

two lines of movement may be exhibited in parallel columns, in words taken from the Epistle to the Romans :—

“ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called : and whom he called, them he also justified : and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”—Rom. viii. 28-30.

“ Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed ? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear without a preacher ? And how shall they preach, except they be sent ? . . . So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”—Rom. x. 13-17.

§ 12. The Inductive treatment of facts is possible only in cases where, not effects alone, but causes as well as effects, are presented to the mind. This may be regarded as an essential condition of success. And hence it follows that it is upon the external line of the means of grace (as exhibited in the second of the above quoted passages), where the regular order of antecedent and sequence is capable of being traced, that we may hope to succeed, by the method of induction, in ascertaining the principles or laws of the Spirit's operation in the conversion of the soul to Christ. If the relations between the successive links in this golden Chain of Salvation could be more exactly determined, it can scarcely be doubted that the means of grace might be made much more profitable than they have proved under the empirical, and often perfunctory and formal manner in which they have

been employed. It would then be scarcely possible for men to mistake a gaudy ritual, exhibited to the eye, for the Divine method by which we are to be led to faith.

§ 13. In this, as in all other departments of life, the order of systematic thought differs from the order of actual occurrence, just as the science of any process differs from its history. It would even appear as if personal salvation might be carried on interchangeably by two different methods. The first is the doctrinal method, in which the knowledge of Christ is gained by dogmatic teaching, beginning with the acquisition of principles, and proceeding to the application of those principles in practical Christian life; very much as we learn to use a dead language by first learning the rules of its grammar, and then working consciously and laboriously under their guidance. The second method is the historical, with its obscure beginnings, its empirical advances, and its unconscious conformity to principles; just as children learn their mother-tongue. Accordingly, the unscientific experience of salvation differs greatly from the scientific. Both have their place and value; they are mutually helpful and corrective, and must, ultimately, harmonise with each other.

§ 14. The actual history of conversion reveals the interesting fact, that the obscure preparations for salvation have often been found under conditions of life altogether different from those which have now been stated. From all the ends of the

earth, from every variety of previous training, men have looked to Christ, and been saved. If our Lord has said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him;" He has also said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."* He demands no fitness or preparation, but the feeling of need and the venture of faith. The salvation of the gospel is a common salvation, and it addresses itself to our common humanity everywhere, and in all times. All over the world there is, everywhere, a vast manifold human nature, with all its mysterious wealth of thought, and imagination, and conscience, which has no need to seek the Saviour by long circuitous routes, trodden by historic races. "The Lord will famish all the gods of the earth; and men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen."† The Roman centurion, Cornelius, was thus addressed by Peter: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."‡ The invitation is, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." And this Divine invitation is identical with the Divine method. "The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the

* John vi. 44.

† Zeph. ii. 11.

‡ Acts x. 34, 35.

deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. . . For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

* Rom. x. 6-13.

CHAPTER IV.

TYPES OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

§ 1. IN the last chapter I attempted to give some account of the manner in which the fundamental principle, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, begins to become a matter of subjective realisation and of personal experience. We saw that this result is brought about by a supernatural agency working obscurely through manifold secondary causes, which may be investigated by the method of Induction, at least within certain limits.

§ 2. I will now go on to remark that, as a true Christian experience begins with faith in Christ, so the whole of the subsequent development depends upon an undeviating fidelity to Christ. St. Paul teaches us that we are saved if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end. He also says, "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught." And our Lord Himself has said, "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

§ 3. But the Christian character does not unfold under one uniform type. From the fundamental principle of faith in Christ, as from a common root, there spring various forms of excellency. It is needful, for the purposes of this Essay, briefly to indicate some of the most marked of these varieties, and to speak of the peculiar terms in which they are commonly described, and the limitations under which they exist. They will be spoken of as "Types" of Christian character; that word being used to signify those prominent features which distinguish one class from another of those who have a common ground of discipleship. All the elements of a true character may be present, but the type to which the character belongs is determined by the one quality which eminently predominates over the rest.

SECTION 1.—PIETY.

§ 4. The first Type of Christian excellency is that which consists in the exercise of the devout affections, and to which the term Piety is here applied. It is in this form that the earliest manifestation of the new life commonly presents itself. In the Scripture it is called our "first love." The beautiful description given of it by the prophet will readily occur to the memory. "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the first-fruits of his increase."* In

* Jer. ii. 2, 8.

this early stage of spiritual growth there is a great simplicity of experience. The different faculties of the new nature have as yet no separate activity. The whole function of the spiritual life, which at a later period, and in a more complex condition of Christian development, becomes differentiated into special forms, is, for the present, thrown upon the warm spontaneous instincts of the renewed heart. Love performs the office of conscience, and reason, and will; and performs them with a true instinct which, for the time, seldom goes wrong. It feels its way to truth in doctrine and to right in action, as if it superseded the office of the rational and moral faculties. And above all, it supplies an energy to the soul, which makes it ready to face danger and to endure suffering for the Saviour's sake.

§ 5. This condition of simple piety is sometimes, in its earliest stage, distinguished by an outbreak of emotion, which has some resemblance to that excited joy of discovery which often attends scientific inquiry when some new truth breaks for the first time upon the mind. In such cases, it is not at all surprising that a certain extravagance of behaviour should be exhibited, such as may be offensive to the cooler minds of those who are altogether out of sympathy with the gladness of the believing soul.

§ 6. Such experience is shared in common by persons occupying every region of intellectual cultivation, and is often felt most deeply by children

and unlearned persons. It is the effect of Divine illumination. Things hidden from the wise and prudent are revealed unto babes. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God : or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us." To these feelings, the Eternal and Invisible appear of such surpassing magnitude, as to throw all the relations of the seen and temporal into the dim edge, far out of the focus of vision. The soul has to do with God as very near, and with a living Saviour. It has such spiritual joy, that it can afford to tread all earthly things beneath its feet. It has found the hidden bread, and ceases to envy other men their worldly good. We have heard it said that ideas cannot exist without words. But if so, our vocabulary would be the limit of our experience. Yet, such experience as that which is here recorded, forces us to acknowledge that we may have thoughts too big for utterance, and that no language can express the emotions which sway our whole being.

§ 7. This style of Christian experience, when studied and interpreted, gives rise to a special set of terms suited to describe the several parts of the process. Forensic ideas and governmental imagery are not brought into use. The conception of sin is less that of a transgression of law, than of a personal offence against God as our heavenly Father—the

undutiful attempt of the prodigal son to find an independent existence in a far country. Repentance is the grief and shame of the prodigal coming to himself, and returning to throw himself at his father's feet, willing to submit to any humiliation of service, if only he might once more find a place at home. Justification becomes a reinstatement in his forfeited position in his father's house. And the whole process turns upon points of personal feeling, rather than upon points of principle or law. The main business of religion is an endeavour to cultivate pious emotions, and to keep up a devout communion with God and Christ.

§ 8. This is, undoubtedly, a very pleasing view of the Christian life: perhaps, in one sense, it is the very highest we can take of it, just as beautiful, simple childhood, with its deep, spontaneous luxury of life, seeking no theory of its own blessedness, is the very highest form of humanity, if only it could be perpetuated in all its simplicity and freshness. It is that state to which we shall once more ascend, after the long trial of bitter experience and conflict of thought. But in real life there is a wide interval between the childhood of innocence and the childhood of salvation. We cannot help trying to interpret the secret of our instinctive life. And when we encounter the problem, and are wounded in the conflict, it is perilous to try to pass off upon ourselves the illusion that the simplicity of our first love remains unbroken. Once committed to the trial, we are not at liberty to recede

from it when we like. Till the problem is fully solved, and "the cause is thoroughly pleaded," the painful strife must go on.

§ 9. But this condition of experience has its peculiar defects and counterfeits. Strong devotional feeling is sometimes found in connection with very languid perceptions of moral integrity. It is only putting an extreme case of this delusive tendency, altogether inconsistent with faith in Christ, to mention the well-known fact, that very rude and immoral persons are found to observe a routine of religious observances; * and nothing can exceed the zeal of devotees in the sacrifices they make in the services of religion, whilst they are exceedingly obtuse in their moral perceptions, and freely indulge in practices which violate the simplest laws of truth and righteousness.

§ 10. There is also another danger. We are apt to ascribe objective existence to the subjective creations of our own minds. The imagination is never so active as when we are under the stimulating influence of religious emotion. The creative power of our own minds, when under such excitement, is one of our most perilous endowments; and one, to the dangers of which, as a moral trial, we are least on our guard. The warmth and

* "The Italian bandit, who has a regular confessor attached to his gang, and who devotes a fixed proportion of his booty to the altar of the Madonna; the Greek, who will stab a man without hesitation, but would shudder at the thought of touching cheese and butter after Sexagesima Sunday, illustrate this temper of mind, whose most noteworthy examples are found in superstitious criminals like Louis XI. and Henry III. of France."—*Contemporary Review*, Dec. 1871, p. 59.

beauty of the unusual conceptions which emerge, win our admiration, as if they were actual revelations from God; and we delight to dwell upon them, and to get other minds to share them with us.* This subjective tendency of religious earnestness is common to human nature in all ages, and was very strongly denounced by the prophet Jeremiah. "I have heard what the prophets said, that prophecy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal." We are not forbidden the free exercise of the imagination and creative thought. What we are forbidden is, the passing off of the products of our own minds as Divine ideas. "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock

* The tendency to assume an exact correspondence between the laws of the mind and those of things external to it, gives rise to a misapprehension of the import of general terms which constitutes mysticism—"a word so much oftener written and spoken than understood. Whether in the Vedas, in the Platonists, or in the Hegelians, mysticism is neither more nor less than ascribing objective existence to the subjective creations of our own faculties, to ideas or feelings of the mind; and believing that, by watching and contemplating these ideas of its own making, it can read in them what takes place in the world without."—Mill's "Logic," vol. ii. p. 320, 6th Ed.

in pieces? Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbour [plagiarists]. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.”*

SECTION 2.—CONSCIENTIOUSNESS.

§ 11. The second type of Christian character is that in which conscience becomes predominant, instead of the affections. The claims of personal affection are now less influential than those of principle. Sentiment gives way to the feeling of right. The supremacy of law overrules the idea of personal government. God and man are viewed as alike subject to its dominion.

§ 12. When men put conscience forward, as the supreme faculty to be regenerated by Divine grace through faith in Christ, we find all the details of the work taking their distinctive terms from this conception. . Holiness and Salvation will almost be synonymous terms. The great end of life will be righteousness. The character of Christ will attract the mind to Him as holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Our daily endeavour will be to be holy, as God is holy. Our

* Jer. xxiii. 25-32.

conception of sin will be that of transgression of law. Repentance will be grief on account of violations of duty. And conscience, ever becoming finer and more delicate in its perceptions, as the process of its salvation advances, will be capable of more exquisite joy in the ever-growing distinctions and harmonious combinations of the moral feelings; and will acquire a corresponding depth of susceptibility to the evils of sin, such as, to an unrenewed conscience, have no existence at all. Justification signifies, in the view of this ideal, the forgiveness of sin and the remission of legal penalties, with a restoration to our place in the Divine Commonwealth. And, lastly, heaven is regarded as a state in which the reign of moral law shall be as perfect and constant as the reign of physical law is in the material world. And so the whole process of salvation consists in the restoration of righteousness in the broken and disordered region of human nature.

§ 13. Such a conception of Christian attainment is, if taken by itself, exceedingly defective. It does not correspond with the ideal which we obtain from Christ Himself. The conception neither exhausts Christ's saving work nor meets all our wants. There are other faculties of our soul that need salvation besides the conscience; and, indeed, conscience itself cannot be saved by itself alone. Its decisions are not simply instinctive acts. They contain a judgment of the intellect, as well as an exercise of the moral sense, so that the intellect

must share the saving work. And, then, a character which is the product of faith in Christ, must partake of the beauty of His grace, as well as of its power. The Christian is not a Stoic. St. Paul distinguishes between "a righteous man" for whom scarcely any one will die, and the "good man" for whom some would even dare to die.* The Christian character is defective if either of these qualities is wanting. Where there is a stern adherence to conscientious conviction a man may be trusted, but if the gentler virtues are wanting he is not Christlike.

SECTION 3.—PHILANTHROPY.

§ 14. The third type of character resulting from faith in Christ is that in which Philanthropy is the prevailing feature. Christ, in an especial manner, sanctifies and regenerates the benevolent tendencies of our nature. These seem to be the objects of His special care. From the moment we give ourselves up to be His disciples, the great love wherewith He has loved us supplies both the pattern and the motive by which we are to be influenced in our behaviour towards our fellow-men.

§ 15. The highest conception of excellency in this case is the sacrifice of self for the good of others; and this idea of sacrifice belongs so pre-eminently to Christ, that His Cross is the very symbol of its spirit. He tells us Himself, that He came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister,

* Rom. v. 7.

and to give his life a ransom for many." * And St. John boldly teaches us that the lesson of the cross is binding on us, too, as a law common alike to the master and the disciple. "Herein have we the knowledge of love, that he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." †

§ 16. Here, again, if we take this conception as the central idea of the Christian life, our whole theology immediately throws itself into another and suitable set of expressions and forms of thought. Sin becomes selfishness in its various forms of egotism, self-indulgence, vanity, and the like. Repentance is the remorse which we feel for our selfish, unjust, and ungenerous acts, the grief we have caused others, and the useless, wasted life we have spent. A religious life then signifies a life of benevolent service for the good of the sick, the sorrowful, the ignorant, and the criminal; or the laying out of our talent in such a way as to bring increase to the virtue and happiness of mankind. And, finally, justification means the recovery of the lost stewardship, all past defalcations being condoned, and the confidence of the Lord being once more restored to us, so that He trusts us again with the administration of His goods.

§ 17. But how inadequate this is, if taken as a complete ideal; and how full of peril to our perfect salvation, if regarded as a whole and acted upon by itself, to the neglect of other parts of salvation, is

* Matt. xx. 26.

† 1 John iii. 16.

at once seen, if we look at Christ as our Saviour. The mere "religion of humanity" is not the highest conception of the religion of Christ. The "enthusiasm of humanity," when it is made the supreme law of life,* becomes an idolatry of man. Our Lord's sacrifice was an obedience unto death, under a higher law than that of the enthusiasm of humanity. He has not left this a doubtful matter. He says: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." Again he says, "I came not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me." Here there was no idolatry of man. God was both the beginning and the end of His great offering. It was a sacrifice to God, not to man. The Cross of Christ determines the law of philanthropy as a sacrifice, not to man, but to God for man.

§ 18. And it may be worth while to remark that in the devotion of ourselves for the good of others we owe much to ourselves, in order that we may give the utmost value to the offering. The stream never rises above its fountain. *Tanti eris aliis quanti tibi fueris*, says Cicero; and this is a maxim of universal application. We cannot give (whether

* The author of "Ecce Homo," speaking of Christian disciples, says:—"The enthusiasm of humanity is not only their supreme, but their only law."

the service relate to learning, or wealth, or sympathy) what we do not possess. And in the view of the final judgment, when the day of the Lord shall break in eternal light upon all the works and ways of men, we have need to remember how possible it is, that after all our active zeal and service, we may have to say: "They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." *

SECTION 4.—KNOWLEDGE.

§ 19. There is still the fourth type of Christian excellency, attended with its peculiar characteristics and perils. It consists in the predominance of the intellectual part of the process of salvation. Christ is the Saviour of the reason, as well as of the other faculties of the soul. In the gospel, He is presented to us as "the Word of God;" as "the Light of the World;" and as "the Truth;" and, therefore, as adapted to create and to satisfy a persistent craving of the mind after Divine wisdom. In the view of such a representation, we receive from God, rather than give to Him; and the gospel is a Divine banquet provided for us, rather than a sacrificial feast offered by us to God. The whole business of life becomes an intellectual and spiritual appropriation of the things which have been prepared for us by the Divine bounty.

§ 20. It will here again be observed that with the change of the central idea the whole apparatus of

* Cant. i. 6.

theological expression undergoes a change too. Sin, without losing its ethical character, appears under the form of error, or, in the language of St. John, "the lie." Its penalty is the disaster which results from falsehood and mistake. Repentance, under this limited view of it, signifies a discovery of the lie, and a turning from the "false way" to the truth. Justification is the setting right of our fundamental relations to Divine truth, and the correction of the results of past errors. Sanctification is determined by a growing knowledge of God's truth as revealed in Christ, and is perfect only when every proposition of truth has taken effect upon the mind. The progress of Salvation is then as the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day.

§ 21. But this conception of salvation, if taken alone, has also its peculiar dangers, as all one-sided views of truth have. A religion of mere thought is not the religion of Christ, and may easily degenerate into a cold, intellectual, heartless orthodoxy. We may receive the truth, and yet not obey the truth, and so bring forth no fruit unto perfection. Or, finally, we may mistake mental activity for progress in truth, and the consistency of thought for its validity in the real world. It is not easy to exaggerate the value of true thought, for the guidance of the vast powers which lie at our disposal in the kingdom of God, and which are so often wasted through lack of wise counsel. Yet something else is wanted besides wisdom, before we can have a

complete experience of the Christian salvation. Intellectual development would do little without the great forces supplied by the loving heart and working hands.

§ 22. Such are some of the chief types of character which result from the regenerating influence of Christ's grace. They all take their departure (in experience) from that crisis of experience at which faith receives Christ as the Saviour of the soul. The two factors of salvation (to recur to the figure already used)—faith as the "variant," and Christ as the "constant"—then receive their adjustment; and the saving process is set forward, unfolding into various forms of Christian excellency. These forms are but various manifestations of a common principle; although, as with the light, heat, and actinism of the sun's rays, each of them may be subjected to separate examination. But it is the combination of all these excellences in the same persons, though in varying proportions, that constitutes the beauty and perfection of the Christian life. "All these worketh that one and the selfsame spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." *

* 1 Cor. xii. 11.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE SECULAR DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIANITY.

§ 1. THE account given in the preceding chapters of the rise and growth of salvation through faith in Christ, is limited to individual persons. But the progress of the world's salvation is secular; that is to say, it is not the growth of a year or of a generation; nor is it limited by the lifetime and experience of individual men, but grows on through the ages. The Church has a perpetual life, and takes all the characteristics of what, in law, is called a "body corporate," or "artificial person, who may maintain a perpetual succession and enjoy a kind of legal immortality."* I propose, therefore, before closing this book, to make a few observations upon the historical development of Christianity as it has already taken place in the world.

§ 2. It may be observed, then, that the Christian salvation, considered subjectively, as a human experience, entered into social life by the agency of individual believers. The result of the first movement in this direction, speaking generally, was twofold. First, the formation of the Church, whose

* Blackstone's "Commentary on the Laws of England," book i. chap 18.

inward life gradually and spontaneously formed for itself an organic construction, adapted for the functions which it had to exercise.* And, secondly, the origination of that diffused influence of Christian thought, which slowly and invisibly permeated (no one knew how) the whole region of social and intellectual life around it. The effective strength of the great stir which Christ introduced into the world was evidenced as much by the latter as by the former of these results. On this, however, it is not my purpose to dwell. But it concerns us, at this moment, to observe that in the early life of the Church itself, were repeated, on a vast scale, many of those peculiarities of experience which have already been spoken of as belonging to individual Christians.

§ 3. Let us, then, look very hastily at the actual state of the case. Scanty as are the records of the primitive Churches, enough of their inner life is made known to us, in the New Testament, to give us the assurance that faith in Christ was the basis of their fellowship. This faith was no mere orthodox opinion, but a loving trust. It existed as a passion of devotion to a personal Saviour, who had so recently been on earth, and whose least command was law. It was not St. Paul alone, but the whole Church, that could say: "Now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." That early Christian life was

* See Appendix.

spontaneous and full of joy. Love was "too young to know itself." There was no attempt made to give a scientific definition of the experience. The fresh health of the Church needed no corrective aid from introspective thought. Till the "first love" had been "left," there was no call for repentance. Obedience was prompt in yielding to the great motives which actuated the mind. "The love of Christ constraineth us," they said; "because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again."*

§ 4. The result was that the Apostolic Church was carried, by the impulse of this spontaneous spiritual life, far forward along the pathway of salvation, before she had either need, or leisure, to pause and reflect upon the nature of the power which had so wonderfully come into operation upon her mind. It even seemed as if the whole secular purpose of the gospel was as good as realised, and as if men were ready for the final revelation of Jesus Christ, and the end of the present world. For them to have entered at once upon the millennial glory, would have seemed to them simply natural. It is not at all surprising if men, in such a state of spiritual elevation, thought that the day of the Lord was really at hand. For if the coming of that day is to be measured by moral ripeness, rather than by the mere lapse of time, men were,

* 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

perhaps, at that period of Pentecostal experience, nearer to the coming of the Lord than they have been at any later time in the history of the Church. But this prelibation of the final glory was soon snatched away from the early Church, on account of cowardice and unbelief. There was the renewal of the old story of the first approach of the Israelites to the Promised Land. They had to turn away again into the desert. The lapse of time henceforth seemed to be, not a forward movement, but a continual regression. But through Divine mercy this experience of relapse was converted into a means of discipline. Moses said to Israel: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no."* The mind was forced to turn inward upon itself, and to speculate upon its own sorrows. This was one of the penalties of unbelief, but it was also the first step towards recovery. The very endeavour to repent gave rise to the processes of self-examination, and conscious co-operation with God, in His work of grace. It is disease that leads to the study of medicine and of the laws of health, in spiritual, no less than in physical, therapeutics. If we can detect the causes of past failure, and ascertain, with greater exactness, the true method of success, we may be reconciled to the postponement of the early hope of the Church.

* Deut. viii. 2.

§ 5. It now especially becomes us, upon whom the ends of the world are come, and who are the inheritors of all the failures and successes of the past, to pause and consider our present position. More than eighteen hundred years have passed away since our Lord ascended into heaven; and ever since, in an unbroken course of historical growth, Christianity has made its presence felt in human life. The primitive seed has never ceased to unfold; and from time to time it has shot out "great branches."* Not only has there been the successive rise of Churches in various parts of the world, but there has also been the outgrowth, from the primitive stock, of great fruit-bearing principles, which have changed the whole condition of human life. There have been growths of government, of systems of doctrine, of science, and of art. What is true in the spirit of modern science is entirely a Christian production, and is to be traced to Christian sources. Even those outgrowths which have been treated as heresies, can be traced to their points of insertion in the parent stock. Some of these products have only succeeded in living on for a time, and have then withered and died off; others have maintained a fruit-bearing existence, and have given life to more varied forms of spiritual development. "Every branch in me," our Lord has said, "that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

* Mark iv. 32.

“If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”* These words of Christ relate to persons, but they are equally applicable to principles and institutions.

§ 6. And here arise two great questions, which especially need to be seriously pondered. How far has this secular growth of Christianity remained true to the constituent principle of salvation, true to that simple confiding faith in Christ as a living, personal Saviour, upon which it first took its rise in the world? And: How far has there been among believers a steady endeavour that the growth of the Church should be, not the growth of a vast worldly institution, but in very deed “the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”†

§ 7. The spiritual strength of the Church has invariably depended upon the simplicity of her faith in Christ. It is not a mere question of historic persistency. That the Church has had a continuous history, is granted as a matter of fact. An unbroken narrative of her fortunes may be traced from the days of the apostles to the present time. But the growth of the Church is not simply a question of historical continuity. It involves the behaviour of the moral agents who have in various ways contributed to make that

* John xv. 2-6.

† Eph. iv. 12, 13.

history, and who are responsible for what it is. In studying the material world, we have only to do with natural forces and elements, in whose action there is neither virtue nor criminality. It is facts alone which concern us. We have only to take what we find, and then proceed to generalize, without asking whether the world might have been created better than it is. It is very different with the developments of the Church. What concerns us there is the *quid oportet*, almost as much as the *quid est*. We have to consider how far the growth of Christianity has been perverted by the influence of pride, self-will, ambition, and ignorance. Without casting any shade upon the faithfulness of the Holy Ghost, as the Sanctifier and Guide of the Church of Christ, we cannot but see that the Church herself has too often adopted false methods of interpreting the truth, and too often offered resistance to its progress.

§ 8. I have at the beginning of this Essay shown how, by the adoption of the maxim of the Schoolmen, that "no science can be collected from particulars," the theologians of the Middle Ages altogether closed the pathway of Inductive Inquiry, and so condemned the mind to sterility for many long ages. I have now to point out that by the neglect of Induction the Church of Rome has fallen into a still greater calamity; namely, that of mistaking its own ideals for realities, and reasoning from them as if they were realities, and

so she has become the pitiable victim of that arrogance and self-satisfaction by which she is distinguished. It is the direct result of this fundamental error, that the Roman Church takes herself to be the perfect realisation of the Divine purpose, the ideal of a saved humanity, the completed mystical body of Christ—so far as this world is concerned. And the result is, that whilst her defects stand open to the world, she appears as if, in her own view, she had nothing fresh to learn, nothing to regret, nothing to rectify, nothing to forsake; but was above all need and possibility of reformation, and had a right to look upon herself as Christ's perfect bride, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. And in this character she exacts the worship of the world.*

§ 9. Ideal conceptions of what the Church of Christ, as a corporate body, ought to be and is destined to become, are very beautiful. They may be regarded as divine prophecies of the future; and they may be employed for the purpose of awakening a spirit of hope and of self-correction. But when they are used as logical premises, in such a way as to falsify the facts of history and experience, they may easily create a spirit of self-complacency and of unreality. If we believe our ideals to be realised.

* "If the same person who revealed the truth still preserves it, it is as unreasonable for man to profess to reform the Church of God, as it would be to endeavour to uphold and renew the world. Men may gird a dome, or reform a political society, but they can no more reform the Church of God, than they can give cohesion to the earth, or contravene the order of the seasons, or the precession of the equinox."—Manning's "Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost," p. 215.

facts when they are not, we shall be led to neglect the means of making them so. Such was the condition of the Church of the Laodiceans. "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." * And to such a Church might also be addressed the words of the ancient prophet: "Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of my people?" †

§ 10. Any Church, taking its departure from such an ideal conception of its own perfect state, shutting its eyes to facts, having plenty of time for development, and possessed of an organum of formal logic like that of the schools, might well be expected in the long run to issue the "Syllabus" and the Vatican Decree—the one intended to smite back the human mind in its advance towards freedom, and the other to make its chief pastor the Divine Lord of the human conscience.

§ 11. Perfect ideals are among the most precious helps to our Christian growth. Without them our souls would cleave to the dust. But in proportion to their value, is the moral risk we incur in the use of them. It requires great wisdom, and even greater humility, to use them aright. The peril attending mistake in the application of them is the

* Rev. iii. 17.

† Jer. ix. 6, 7.

greatest that can overtake us. Our character is spiritually injured, if we rashly bring them forward into real life. It may be, *e. g.*, a soul-inspiring prophecy, that "God sees no iniquity in Jacob;" but for Jacob to take the prophecy to himself, and say to his brother, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou," is to expose himself to that severe reproof which God has uttered by the prophet: "These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day." *

§ 12. Now there are three ways in which we may treat our ideal conceptions. First, we may hold them as great doctrinal principles, and may regard them as objects of intellectual contemplation, without attempting to realise them in actual life. Or, secondly, we may reject them altogether as metaphysical conceptions; and, as "practical Christians," we may throw ourselves, without any guidance from high doctrine, upon the mere instincts of the Christian life, and the dictates of common sense. Or, finally, we may accept high doctrine; and then steadily set ourselves to work towards the ideal, in actual conduct. In all departments of practical art, the pure conceptions of abstract science are indispensable to successful work. May not this rule be carried into the spiritual life? Whilst clearly holding on to the great transcendental conceptions of the intellectual world, may we not also accept the actual conditions of friction and expediency, so to speak, under which they must be brought into practical use?

* Isa. lxxv. 5.

§ 13. No one will, perhaps, deny that the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Ghost secures the success of redemption in the long run ; and so, the final perseverance, and ultimate perfection, of the Catholic Church. But this gift does not guarantee that, before the final perfection is reached, there shall be no error, no sins, no mistakes, no long dark ages of wasted life, no "man of sin sitting in the temple of God," no "falling away first." The gift of the Spirit is a sure earnest and pledge of the final inheritance, but it does not warrant any individual person, or local Church, to boast of being elect, and incapable of falling from grace. Let it be granted that "some must enter into his rest;" yet the teaching of the Exodus reveals to us the fact, that those who were disobedient, even though they came out of Egypt by Moses, could not enter in because of unbelief. The gift of the Holy Ghost is God's greatest gift to men after the gift of His own Son ; and this gift, once given, has never been taken back. But if any local Church assumes, on this account, that that Spirit can never be withdrawn from her, and that He raises her above the moral conditions of responsibility and makes her infallible, she may find out, when it is too late, that the kingdom of God has been taken away from her, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. As Antinomian idealism may be the ruin of individuals, so ecclesiastical idealism may be the ruin of Churches.

§ 14. The secular development of Christianity

has sometimes, and especially in modern times, taken a less ecclesiastical, and, in some respects, a more remarkable, form than that of the Catholic Church. It has even become a diffused influence of Christian thought, which, like the leaven in our Lord's parable, silently and mysteriously set up a deep ferment in the intellectual and social life of the world. This influence has not always been recognised as of Christian origin, as it has often appeared to be in direct antagonism with the theology and authority of the Church. It has, accordingly, had to establish its beneficent and saving power amidst the unaffected alarm and opposition of pious men who were ready, at any cost, to suppress what they thought to be hostile force. The growth of the Inductive Method is one example of this unconscious Christianity. The men who cultivate it may not know that it is Christ's spirit which moves them ; they may even, in their blindness, "speak a word against the Son of man ;" but not the less is Christ using them as His agents in carrying forward His saving work. All power in heaven and in earth is committed into His hands, and His method of operation is far more complex and indirect than our limited conceptions permit us to think.

§ 15. I shall now bring this Essay to a close, with the confession of my belief that a true Christian experience must be built wholly upon Christ, and that whatever is built on Him, that cannot

bear the fire, shall be burnt up. There is, no doubt, some risk to many of our present opinions and practices involved in such a fiery ordeal. The "gain" which we have accumulated through so many ages of painful thought and prayer, is not lightly to be set down as "loss," and "counted but dung," even though it be to win Christ. But if it is really "loss," why should we close our eyes to the fact? Why should we love our beautiful mistakes? Is not the beauty of truth better than the beauty of error? Can we not afford to face the truth, when we feel that we are capable of improvement? Not otherwise can we make full proof of Christ's saving power. A real discipleship, like that which, on the Lake of Galilee, went into the same ship to sink or swim with Him, means nothing less than this. Faith in Christ signifies our belief that Christ, if we will obey Him, is ready to save every single thing in our nature that is worth saving, however lost and perverted it may hitherto have been. But then, the "obedience of faith" requires that we should risk all to His saving power, and not go only ankle-deep in our venture. When Christ stands alone, on the surface of the water, far away from all subordinate agencies, and in conditions of strange revelation, such a faith will not shrink from leaving the ship at His bidding, and going to Him there.

§ 16. Whether, in thus acting, we become "fools for Christ's sake," abdicating our reason and the true laws which ought to govern it; or are for the

first time finding the highest use of reason, is indeed the most serious alternative that can be submitted to the Church of Christ. We know that He requires nothing less. To profess faith in Him, is to profess a principle which will conceal no inward rottenness. It refuses to lend itself to the designs of insincere men. They must work with other aids. For, as soon as they take up this principle, and follow it out to its true results, all that is false must vanish, because unable to bear the test; and that for the simple reason, that whilst faith in Christ is adapted to call forth a healthy development of the Christian life in true-hearted men, so, too, like the sun, by calling upon the resources of the plant, it determines its withering, when unable to perfect its fruit.

APPENDIX.

Note 1, p. 69.

IDEAL CONCEPTION OF LAW.

"AND this brings us to the Fifth meaning in which the word Law is habitually used in Science—a meaning which is indeed well deserving of attention. In this sense Law is used to designate not any observed order of facts—not any Force to which such order may be due—neither yet any combination of Force adjusted to the discharge of function, but—some purely Abstract Idea which carries up to a higher point our conception of what the phenomena are, and of what they do. There may be no phenomena actually corresponding to such Idea, and yet a clear conception of it may be essential to a right understanding of all the phenomena around us. A good example of Law in this sense is to be found in the law which in the Science of Mechanics is called the First Law of Motion. The law is that all Motion is in itself (that is to say, except as affected by extraneous Forces) uniform in velocity and rectilinear in direction. Thus, according to this law, a body moving, and not subject to any extraneous Force, would go on moving for ever, at the same rate of velocity, and in an exactly straight line.

"Now there is no such motion as this existing on the earth, or in the heavens. It is an Abstract Idea of Motion which no man has ever, or can ever see exemplified. Yet a clear apprehension of this Abstract Idea was necessary to a right understanding, and to the true explanation, of all the motions which are actually seen. It was long before this idea was arrived at, and for want of it the efforts of Science to explain the visible phenomena of Motion were always taking a wrong direction. There was a real difficulty in conceiving it, because not only is there no such motion in Nature, but there is no possibility by artificial means of producing it. It is impossible to release any moving body from the impulses of extraneous Force. The First Law of Motion

is, therefore, a purely Abstract Idea. It represents a rule which never operates, as we conceive it, by itself, but is always complicated with other rules which produce a corresponding complication in result. Like many other laws of the same class, it was discovered, not by looking outwards, but by looking inwards, not by observing, but by thinking. The human mind, in the exercise of its own faculties and powers, sometimes by careful reasoning, sometimes by the intuitions of genius unconscious of any process, is able, from time to time, to reach now one and now another of those purely Intellectual Conceptions which are the basis of all that is intelligible to us in the Order of the Material World. We look for an ideal order or simplicity in material Law; and the very possibility of exact Science depends upon the fact that such ideal order does actually prevail, and is related to the abstract conceptions of our own intellectual nature. It is in this way that many of the greatest discoveries of Science have been made. Especially have the pioneers in new paths of discovery been led to the opening of those paths by that fine sense for abstract truths which is the noblest gift of genius. Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo were all guided in their profound interpretations of visible phenomena by those intuitions which arise in minds finely organised, brought into close relations with the mind of Nature, and highly trained in the exercise of speculative thought. They guessed the truth before they proved it to be true, and those guesses had their origin in Abstract Ideas of the mind which turned out to be ideas really embodied in the Order of the Universe. So constantly has this recurred in the history of Science, that, as Dr. Whewell says, it is not to be considered as an exception, but as the rule."—Duke of Argyle's, "Reign of Law," pp. 108–110.

Note 2, p. 76.

INDUCTIVE INFERENCE FROM PARTICULARS TO PARTICULARS.

THE following are Bishop Butler's remarks upon the example, given in the text, of our Lord's use of Inference from particulars to analogous cases without formal generalisation.

"Our Lord Himself, from whose command alone the obligation of positive institutions arises, has taken occasion to make the comparison between them and moral precepts, when the

Pharisees censured Him *for eating with publicans and sinners*; and also when they censured His disciples *for plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath day*. Upon this comparison he has determined expressly, and in form, which shall have the preference when they interfere. And by delivering His authoritative determination in a proverbial manner of expression, He has made it general: "*I will have mercy and not sacrifice*" (Matt. ix. 13, and xii. 7). The propriety of the word *proverbial* is not the word insisted upon, though I think the manner of speaking is to be called so. But that the manner of speaking very remarkably renders the determination general, is surely indisputable. For had it in the latter case been said only that God preferred mercy to the rigid observance of the Sabbath, even then, by parity of reason, most justly might we have argued that He preferred mercy, likewise, to the observance of other ritual institutions, and, in general, moral duties to positive ones. And thus the determination would have been general, though its being so were inferred and not expressed. But as the passage really stands in the gospel, it is much stronger; for the sense, and the very literal words of our Lord's answer, are as applicable to any other instance of a comparison between positive and moral duties, as to this upon which they were spoken. And if, in case of competition, mercy is to be preferred to positive institutions, it will be scarcely thought that justice is to give place to them. It is remarkable, too, that as the words are a quotation from the Old Testament, they are introduced, on both the forementioned occasions, with a declaration that the Pharisees did not understand the meaning of them. This, I say, is very remarkable; for since it is scarcely possible for the most ignorant person not to understand the literal sense in the passage of the prophet (Hosea vi.), and since understanding the literal sense would not have prevented their *condemning the guiltless* (see Matt. xii. 7), it can hardly be doubted that the thing which our Lord really intended in that declaration was, that the Pharisees had not learnt from it, as they might, wherein the *general* spirit of religion consists; that it consists in moral piety and virtue as distinguished from forms and ritual observances. However, it is certain we may learn this from His Divine explication of the passage in the gospel."

Note 8, p. 141.

CHRISTIANITY AND MAHOMETANISM COMPARED.

“ We observe it is a remarkable characteristic of Scripture, and specially of St. Paul's language, that it takes what may be called the high view of human nature, *i.e.*, of what human nature is capable of, when the proper motive and impulse is applied to it. In this sense St. Paul, if I may use the expression, *believes* in human nature; he thinks it capable of rising to great heights even in this life; he sees that in man which really can triumph over the world, the flesh, and the devil; which can struggle, and which can conquer in the struggle. His is what may be called the enthusiastic view of human nature, though tempered by the wisdom of inspiration. He sees in Christian doctrine that strong force which is to break down the *vis inertia* of man, to kindle into life the dormant elements of goodness in him, to set human nature going, and to touch the spring of man's heart. Hence it is that the writer is borne along at times, breathless with vehemence and with rapture, as the visions of hope rise up before him, and man is seen in the prospect over all the face of the earth, ascending in mind to heaven. Hence it is that the flood of thought, becoming too rapid for the medium which conveys it, struggles with and interrupts itself; though at the same time he is equally arrested by the mystery of limitation which adheres to Divine grace, and sees the true Church of God as separate from the world.

“ How marked the contrast when from this high estimate of, this ardent faith in, the capabilities of human nature which a doctrinal foundation imparts, we turn to the idea of man presented to us in a religion of pure Deism. The religion of Mahomet is not a doctrinal religion: it is without an Incarnation, without an Atonement; no sacrifice for sin reveals the awful justice of God, no pardon upon a sacrifice His awful mercy; in the high court of heaven, the Deity sits enthroned in the majesty of omnipotence and omniscience, but without the great symbol of His Infinite Righteousness by His side—the Lamb that was slain. And now observe the effect of this doctrinal void upon the idea of God, and the idea of man, in that religion. If one had to express in a short compass the character of its remarkable founder as a teacher, it would be that that great man had no faith in human

nature. There were two things which he thought man could do, and would do, for the glory of God—transact religious forms and fight; and upon these two points he was severe: but within the sphere of common practical life, where man's great trial lies, his code exhibits the disdainful laxity of a legislator who accommodates his rule to the recipient, and shows his estimate of the recipient by the accommodation which he adopts. Did we search history for a contrast, we could hardly discover a deeper one than that between St. Paul's overflowing standard of the capabilities of human nature, and the oracular cynicism of the great false Prophet. The writer of the Koran does indeed, if any discernor of hearts ever did, take the measure of mankind; and his measure is the same that Satire has taken, only expressed with the majestic brevity of one who had once lived in the realm of Silence. 'Man is weak,' says Mahomet. And upon that maxim he legislates. 'God is minded to make His religion light unto you, for man was created weak.' 'God would make His religion an ease unto you'—a suitable foundation of the code which followed, and fit parent of that numerous offspring of accommodations, neutralising qualifications, and thinly disguised loopholes to the fraud and rapacity of the Oriental, which appear in the Koran, and show, where they do appear, the author's deep acquaintance with the besetting sins of his devoted followers. The keenness of Mahomet's insight into human nature; a wide knowledge of its temptations, persuasives, influences under which it acts; a vast immense capacity of forbearance for it, half grave, half genial, half sympathy, half scorn, issue in a somewhat Horatian model, the character of the man of experience who despairs of any change in man, and lays down the maxim that we must take him as we find him. It was indeed his supremacy in both faculties, the largeness of the passive meditative nature,* and the splendour of action, that constituted the secret of his success. The breadth and flexibility of mind, that could negotiate with every motive of interest, passion, and pride in man, is sur-

* Shakespeare represents the largeness of the passive nature in Hamlet, but a disproportionate largeness which issues in feebleness, because he is always thinking of the whole of things. "A mind may be easily too large for effectiveness, and energy suffer from an expansion of the field of view. The mind of Hamlet lies all abroad like the sea—an universal reflector—but wanting the self-moving principle. Musing, reflection, and irony upon all the world supersede action, and a task evaporates in philosophy."—"Christian Remembrancer," No. lxiii. p. 178.

prising. There is boundless sagacity : what is wanting is hope, a belief in the capabilities of human nature. There is no upward flight in the teacher's idea of man. Instead of which, the notion of the power of earth, and the impossibility of resisting it, depresses his whole aim, and the shadow of the tomb falls upon the work of the great false Prophet.

“The idea of God is akin to the idea of man. ‘He knows us,’ says Mahomet. God’s *knowledge*, the vast *experience*, so to speak, of the Divine Being, His infinite acquaintance with man’s frailties and temptations, is appealed to as the ground of confidence. ‘He is the Wise, the Knowing One.’ ‘He is the Knowing, the Wise.’ ‘He is easy to be reconciled.’ Thus is raised a notion of the Supreme Being which is rather an extension of the character of the large-minded and sagacious man of the world, than an extension of man’s virtue and holiness. He forgives because He knows too much to be rigid, because sin universal ceases to be sin, and must be given way to. Take a man who has had large opportunity of studying mankind, and has come into contact with every form of human weakness and corruption ; such a man is indulgent as a simple consequence of his knowledge, because nothing surprises him. So the God of Mahomet forgives by reason of His vast knowledge. The absence of the doctrine of the Atonement makes itself felt in the character of that Being who forgives without a sacrifice for sin, showing that without that doctrine there cannot even be high Deism. So knit together is the whole fabric of truth ; without a sacrifice a pardoning God becomes an easy God, and an easy God makes a low human nature. No longer awful in His justice, the Wise ‘the Knowing One’ degrades His own act of forgiveness by converting it into connivance, and man takes full advantage of so tolerant and convenient a Master. ‘Man is weak,’ and ‘God knows him’—these two maxims, taken together, constitute an ample charter of freedom for human conduct. ‘God knows us,’ says man. He knows that we are not adapted to a very rigid rule, He does not look upon us in that light, He does not expect any great things from us ; not an inflexible justice, not a searching self-denial, not a punctilious love of our neighbour ; He is considerate, He is wise, He knows what we can do, and what we cannot do ; He does not condemn us, He makes allowance for us, ‘He knows us.’ So true is the saying of Pascal, that ‘without the knowledge of Jesus Christ we see nothing but confusion in the nature of God and in our own nature’ (*Pensées*, vol. ii. p. 317).

"The force which Christianity has applied to the world, and by which it has produced that change in the world which it has, is, in a word, the doctrine of grace. There has been a new power actually working in the system, and that power has worked by other means besides doctrine; but still it is the law of God's dealings with us to apply His power to us by means of our faith in that power, *i.e.*, by doctrine. Faith in his own position, the belief at the bottom of every Christian's heart, that he stands in a different relation to God from a heathen, and has a supernatural source of strength—this it is which has made him *act*, has been the rousing and elevating motive to the Christian body, and raised its moral practice."—Mozley's Bampton Lectures "On Miracles," pp. 177-182.

Note 4, p. 258.

THE SCHOLASTIC DOCTRINE OF REPENTANCE.

"The doctrine of Repentance, as exhibited in the Theology of the Schools, also takes its expression from Aristotle's Theory of Justice. Aquinas places it under the head of Commutative Justice, or that exercise of Justice by which due compensation is awarded for an offence committed. It is the *pæna*, the satisfaction or requital due for the offence, voluntarily taken on himself by the offender, as distinct from the infliction of it by a judge. And the indispensable necessity of it is rested by Aquinas on this ground; because an offence against God is in direct opposition to grace: the good-will of God, the only cause of goodness in man, is turned from the offender, and God cannot remit the offence without a change of will, which in Him is impossible. The offender, therefore, must himself be turned towards God, by a detestation of the past sin and a resolution of amendment.

"In the consideration, therefore, of this doctrine, we may observe a striking difference in comparison with others relating to human agency. To the reduction of the subject under the head of Penal Justice may be ascribed, in great measure, the unscriptural notions and unholy practices which grew up in the Church in regard to the expiation of offences and their respective criminality. The word *pæna* alone gave opportunity for introducing into religion all the subtle casuistry and technical distinctions of Civil Law. Hence, too, the Sacramental

character with which Repentance has been invested, under the name of Penance,* the application of a penal code of religion demanding the ministrations of the priest.† Thus the subject of Repentance, instead of taking its place by the side of Faith in the discussions of the Schoolmen, is passed over *as a doctrine* of the gospel with slight notice. But as a sacrament, and a ritual of punishment, it obtains a full consideration. We may perceive the effect of this mode of treating the subject in our Articles, there being none expressly on the doctrine of Repentance, whilst there is reference to the questions raised on the subject by the Scholastic Philosophy in the Articles which speak of Penance, Purgatory, and Masses."—Bishop Hampden's Bampton Lectures on "The Scholastic Philosophy considered in relation to Christian Theology," pp. 248, 9.

Note 5, p. 278.

OF THE HUMAN ORIGIN OF THEOLOGICAL DOGMAS.

THE following is the general summary of Bishop Hampden's teaching in his Bampton Lectures as to the nature and use of Dogmatic Theology. "It is evident, I think, from the inquiry which I have been pursuing, that the doctrinal statements of religious truth have their origin in the principles of the human mind. Strictly speaking, in Scripture itself there are no *doctrines*. What we read there is matter of fact: either fact nakedly set forth as it occurred, or fact explained and elucidated by the light of inspiration cast upon it. It will be thought, perhaps, that the Apostolic Epistles are an exception to this observation. If any part of Scripture contains *doctrinal* statements, it will, at any rate, be supposed to be the Epistolary. But even this part, if accurately considered, will not be found an exception. No one, perhaps, will maintain that there is any new truth of Christianity set forth in the Epistles; any truth, I mean, which does not

* The translation of the Latin Vulgate has here sanctioned a most important deviation from the simplicity of the Greek original, in the use of the terms *pœnitentiam agite* for the simple *μετανοείτε*.

† The expression of Aristotle, *κολάσεις εἰς τὴν ἰατρειάν τινες*, was adapted to the explanation of the efficacy of suffering to expiate guilt. See Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* Prima secundæ, qu. lxxxvii. Art. 7.—Unde non habet simpliciter rationem pœnæ, sed medicina, nam et medici austeras potiones propinant infirmis ut conferant sanitatem, &c.

presuppose the whole truth of Human Salvation by Jesus Christ as already determined and complete. The Epistles clearly imply that the work of Salvation is done. They repeat, and insist on, its most striking parts; urging chiefly on man what remains for him to *do*, now that Christ has done all that God purposed in behalf of man, before the foundation of the world. Let the experiment be fairly tried; let the inveterate idea, that the Epistles are the doctrinal portion of Scripture, be for a while banished from the mind; let them be read simply as the works of our Fathers in the Faith—of men who are commending us rather to the love of Christ than opening our understanding to the mysteries of Divine knowledge: and, after such an experiment, let each decide for himself whether the practical or the theoretic view of the Epistles is the correct one. For my part, I cannot doubt but that the decision will be in favour of the practical character of them. The speculating theologian will perhaps answer, by adducing text after text from an epistle, in which he will contend that some dogmatic truth, some theory, or system, or peculiar view of Divine truth, is asserted. But ‘what is the chaff to the wheat?’ I appeal from the logical criticism of the Apostles’ words to their apostolic spirit—from Paul philosophising to Paul preaching, and entreating, and persuading. And I ask, whether it is likely that an apostle would have adopted the form of an epistolary communication, for imparting mysterious propositions to disciples, with whom he enjoyed the opportunity of personal intercourse; and to whom he had already ‘declared the whole counsel of God;’ whether in preaching Christ he would have used a method of communicating truth, which implies some scientific application of language—an analysis, at least, of propositions into their terms,—in order to its being rightly understood? and I further request it may be considered, whether it was not by such a mode of inference from the Scripture language as would convert the Epistles into textual authorities on points of controversy, that the very system of the Scholastic Theology was erected. Dogmas of Theology, then *as such*, are human authorities. But do I mean to say by this, that they are unimportant in religion, or that they are essentially wrong, foreign to true Religion and inconsistent with it? I wish rather to establish their importance and proper truth, as distinct from the honour and verity of the simple Divine word.”—Hampden’s Bampton Lectures, pp. 878-6.

Note 6, p. 288.

THE THEORY OF DEVELOPMENT.

DR. NEWMAN, speaking of his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, says : " The view on which it is written has at all times, perhaps, been implicitly adopted by theologians, and I believe has recently been illustrated by several distinguished writers of the continent, such as De Maistre and Möhler, viz., that the increase and expansion of the Christian Creed and Ritual, and the variations which have attended the process in the case of individual writers and Churches, are the necessary attendants on any philosophy, or polity, which takes possession of the intellect and heart, and has had any wide or extended dominion ; that, from the nature of the human mind, time is necessary for the full comprehension and perfection of great ideas ; and that the highest and most wonderful truths, though communicated to the world, once for all, by inspired teachers, could not be comprehended all at once by the recipients, but, as received, and transmitted, by minds not inspired, and through media which were human, have required only the longer time and deeper thought for their full illumination. This may be called the *Theory of Developments*. . . .

" It is undoubtedly an hypothesis to account for a difficulty ; and such too are the various explanations given by astronomers, from Ptolemy to Newton, of the apparent motions of the heavenly bodies. But it is as unphilosophical on that account to object to the one as to object to the other. Nay, more so ; for an hypothesis, such as the present, rests upon facts as well as accounts for them, and, independent of the need of it, is urged upon us by the nature of the case. Nor is it more reasonable to express surprise that, at this time of day, a theory is necessary, granting for argument's sake that the theory is novel, than to have directed a similar wonder in disparagement of the theory of gravitation or the Plutonian theory in geology."—Newman's "*Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*," p. 27.

Note 7, p. 288.

THE CHRISTIANITY OF THE FUTURE.

" It may be asked, Is not Christianity always the same ? In the sense in which I use the word, certainly not. Christianity

is one thing—the Gospel, or the Christian revelation, is another. The Gospel, or Christian revelation, is, as to its great truth, always the same. It has been given us, once for all, in the life and sayings of our Divine Master, and of those whom He specially authorised. It is the foundation. It is, in one word, Jesus Christ Himself : other foundation than whom none can lay. But *Christianity* is the building raised upon that foundation ; and this may, and, indeed must be, very variously constructed. Not only will it vary in worth of material and in power of endurance, according to St. Paul's well-known illustration ; but it also will and must vary according to difference of times, climates, national temperaments and habits, classes and stations of men ; nor less so according to the prevalence, at this or that time, of certain currents of thought and inquiry. Christ is one, and true, and unchangeable ; but a man's Christianity, a family's Christianity, nay, the whole world's Christianity, at any given time, may be inconsistent and untrue, and liable to and needing change. By Christianity, then, I mean man's fashion of following Christ. And as each age and country has its own fashion, I shall presume to inquire whether our present fashion in this land is right ; whether it is calculated to meet the demands which our age and our habits of thought are making upon us ; and in so far as we may think we find that it fails in these points, what change it needs in order to correct that failure, and enable it to hold its place as the Christianity of the future ?” —“ The Christianity of the Present and of the Future,” by the Dean of Canterbury. *Good Words*, January, 1870, p. 46.

Note 8, p. 340.

OF THE INTERPRETATION OF CHRIST'S PRECEPTS.

“ In many of our Lord's discourses He speaks of the ‘ blessedness of poverty,’ of the hardness which they that have riches will experience ‘ in attaining eternal life.’ ‘ It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye ;’ and, ‘ Son, thou in thy lifetime received thy good things ;’ and again, ‘ One thing thou lackest ; go, sell all that thou hast.’ Precepts like these do not appeal to our experience of life ; they are unlike anything that we see around us at the present day even among good men. . . . To take them literally would be injurious to ourselves and to

society (at least so we think). . . . It will not do to make a great supper, and mingle at the same board the two ends of society, as modern phraseology calls them, fetching in 'the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind,' to fill the vacant places of noble guests. That would be eccentric in modern times, and even hurtful. Neither is it suitable for us to wash one another's feet, or to perform any other menial office, because our Lord set us the example. Well, then, are the precepts of Christ not to be obeyed? Perhaps, in their fullest sense, they cannot be obeyed. But at any rate they are not to be explained away; the standard of Christ is not to be lowered to ordinary Christian life, because ordinary Christian life cannot rise, even in good men, to the standard of Christ. And there may be 'standing among us' some one in ten thousand 'whom we know not,' in whom there is such a Divine union of charity and prudence, that he is most blest in the entire fulfilment of the precept—'Go, sell all that thou hast'—which to obey literally, in other cases, would be evil, and not good. Many there have been, doubtless (not one or two only), who have given all that they had on earth to their families or friends—the poor servant 'casting her two mites into the treasury,' denying herself the ordinary comforts of life for the sake of erring parent or brother; that is not probably an uncommon case, and as near an approach as in this life we make to heaven. And there may be some one or two rare natures in the world, in whom there is such a Divine courtesy, such a gentleness and dignity of soul, that differences of rank seem to vanish before them, and they look upon the face of others, even of their own servants and dependants, only as they are in the sight of God and will be in His kingdom. And there may be some tender and delicate woman among us, who feels that she has a Divine vocation to fulfil the most repulsive offices towards the dying inmates of the hospital, or the soldier perishing in a foreign land. Whether such examples of self-sacrifice are good or evil, must depend, not altogether on social or economical principles, but on the spirit of those who offer them, and the power which they have in themselves of 'making all things kin.' And even if the ideal itself were not carried out by us in practice, it has nevertheless what may be termed a truth of feeling."—Jowett's Essay "On the Interpretation of Scripture," pp. 362, 3.

Note 9, p. 875.

THE CHARACTER OF THE TRUTH-SEEKER.

THE following beautiful delineation of the seeker after truth is taken from the work of Mr. Bailey, to which I have often referred in the course of this Essay:—

“ Knowledge is progressive, and in this progress every age is placed in a more advantageous position for the comprehension of any subject than the last. Every inquirer, therefore, finds himself on higher ground than his predecessors; he can avail himself of their latest acquisitions without the labour of original discovery, and thus, with unbroken spirits and unsubdued vigour, he can commence his career at the boundary of theirs. Hence, without any presumption in the superiority of his faculties, he may hope to attain views more comprehensive and correct than were enjoyed by men who immeasurably transcended him in capacity. All the advantage, nevertheless, which he has over his precursors, his successors will have over him. All his exertions will tend to place them above him; and the very truths which he discovers, should he be fortunate enough to discover any, will give them the power of detecting the errors with which all truths, on their first manifestation in any mind, are inevitably conjoined.

“ In such considerations as these, there might be something to deter a man of narrow views and selfish feelings. That his opinions should be thus scrutinised and examined, and their imperfections detected; that in process of time he should lose his rank as an oracle on the subject of his exertions, and be superseded by after-sages, might have any other effect than that of stimulating him to exertion. To a man of real genius, however, a man of large and liberal understanding, and as large and liberal feelings, these considerations are at once replete with satisfaction and encouragement, and destructive of undue self-importance and complacency. When he looks back on his predecessors, he appreciates the advantages of his position, and can thus, without undue self-estimation, indulge a fair hope that, by strenuous exertions, his own works may form one of the steps in the intellectual progress of the race, and constitute him the author of benefits to be indefinitely perpetuated. When he looks forward, while he exults in the coming glories of progressive knowledge, and anticipates with

delight the development of truths which he is never to know, he feels a perfect confidence that any real service which he may render to literature or science will be duly appreciated, and rejoices that any errors into which he may unconsciously wander will do little injury, because they will be speedily corrected. Knowing that, were he even the Newton of his age, he must be eventually outstripped, he considers such an incident as nowise derogatory to his talents or reputation: agitated by none of the jealousy which is too common a disgrace to men who ought to rise superior to the weakness of such a passion, he even feels a desire that he may be outstripped in his own lifetime, a curiosity to know by what modifications his own doctrines will be corrected: he is on the watch for new discoveries, because he knows that there are minds which, having mastered preceding knowledge, are in a condition to make them.

“It has frequently been stigmatised as presumptuous and overweening vanity in a man of the present day to fancy himself superior to men of past times; but the view of the subject here exhibited annihilates all such imputations. It takes away all the colour of disrespect from the closest scrutiny of the efforts of his predecessors. He is conscious that, in the most successful controversy, if controversy it may be called, which he may institute with them, the greatest success cannot be considered as any personal superiority on his part over the object of his remarks; he knows that it is the superiority of the station to which his own times have carried him; and thus the profoundest respect is compatible with the freest examination. What does he admire in the great philosophers of past ages?—not surely their errors, perhaps not one of their unqualified opinions; but he admires the reach of thought which, from the then level of knowledge, could touch on truths the full and perfect mastery of which was to be the work of future ages, the slow result of the successive efforts of persevering and vigorous minds.

“Such a view of the progressive character of human knowledge as this would wonderfully facilitate the pursuit of truth. No single principle with which we are acquainted would have so salutary an influence in promoting candour, liberality, openness to conviction, self-knowledge, proper caution, and proper fearlessness.”—Bailey on the “Pursuit of Truth,” pp. 55–58.

Note 10, p. 899.

ABUSE OF THE DOCTRINE OF IMPUTATION.

ALL doctrinal statements are liable to abuse; but then, as Bishop Butler has remarked, "A doctrine having been a shelter for enthusiasm, or made to serve the purpose of superstition, is no proof of the falsity of it; truth or right being somewhat real in itself, and so not to be judged of by its lialleness to abuse, or by its supposed distance from, or nearness to, error."—Butler's Sermons, p. 181. It has been well remarked that the root of this erroneous view of the imputation of Christ's righteousness lies in the notion that God requires good works from us, not for our sakes, but for His own. "If this be true, then, of course it is a matter of indifference who does the good works, whether it be Christ or His followers. If a man wants a map for his own use, he buys it in the shop, and is indifferent whether it was executed by this person or that. If a master in a school wants to teach his boys how to draw a map, then, if a boy brings forward as his own work what is really the work of another, the master, instead of rewarding, will punish such a boy. Now, it should never be forgotten that our heavenly Father wants to teach us how to do good works, and that He requires a virtuous life from us, not really for His sake, but for our own. The doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ gave birth to the Roman Catholic doctrine about works of supererogation, and very naturally; for if God can act upon one fiction, of course He can act upon another, and regard the works of good people as if they were the works of the wicked. The speechless guest, at the marriage-supper, did not point to the gorgeous robe of the King's Son.—Webster's "Notes of Lectures on the New Testament," pp. 155, 6.

Note 11, p. 432.

THE SPONTANEOUS ORGANISATION OF THE CHURCH.

"THE religious society being once born, when a certain number of men become united in common religious creeds, under the law of common religious precepts, and in common religious hopes, that society must have a government. There is no society which could survive a week, an hour, without a government. At the very instant in which a society forms itself,

